NATION

India not xenophobic: EAM rejects Biden's remark

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

India and Sweden stress on need to focus on tech

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Rublev beats Fritz to reach Madrid Open final against Auger-Aliassime

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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BENGALURU'S FORECAST

Yesterday
Min temp: 24°C
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Today
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Max temp: 38°C

SIT arrests HD Revanna after court denies him bail

He was arrested from Deve Gowda's home in abduction case

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

Karnataka JD(S) MLA HD Revanna was arrested by on Saturday by sleuths of the Special Investigation Team, minutes after a court here rejected his anticipatory bail plea in a kidnapping case, officials said.

The former minister was picked up from the Padmanabhanagar residence of his father, JD(S) Supremo and former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda here, and brought to the SIT office. The case was registered against Revanna, a former minister and his confidant Sathish Babanna in Mysuru on Thursday night for allegedly abducting a woman.

The case was registered on a complaint filed by the woman's son, who also alleged that his mother was sexually abused by Revanna's son and the BJP-JD(S) candidate for Hassan Lok Sabha seat Prajwal Revanna.

Babanna has already been arrested in the case.

Revanna being taken into custody by officials of a Special Investigation Team in a kidnapping case on Saturday **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

The woman was allegedly abducted to prevent her from testifying against Prajwal, police sources said.

Seeking anticipatory bail in the case, Revanna approached the Special Court for Elected Representatives, which on Saturday dismissed his plea.

On Saturday, police officials rescued the abducted woman from a farmhouse, allegedly belonging to an aide of Revanna at Kalenahalli village in Hunsur taluk of Mysuru district.

Explicit video clips allegedly involving the 33-year-old Prajwal, grandson of Deve Gowda, had started making the rounds in Hassan in recent days, following which the state government constituted a SIT to probe the sexual abuse allegations against the MP.

Eralier in the day, Home Minister G Parameshwara said a lookout notice has been issued by the SIT against HD Revanna. There are two FIRs registered against him.

He also said, Revanna, a former minister, who has been served a second notice (summons), has time till Saturday evening to appear for questioning before the SIT probing the case. "Anticipating that Revanna may also plan to go abroad, it has been done," Parameshwara said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

K'taka woman tied to pole & thrashed

HAVERI, 4 MAY

- A video of the alleged incident also went viral on social media platforms.

A 50-year-old woman was allegedly tied to an electric pole and thrashed by a group of women in Aremallapur village in this district after her son eloped with a girl, police said on Saturday.

Following the incident which happened on 30 April in Ranebennur Rural Police station limits -- six people, including three women have been arrested. A video of the alleged incident also went viral on social media platforms.

Police said Hanumavva Medleri's son Manjunath, who belongs to the Kuruba community was in love with a girl from Maratha community of the same village since the last two years. But after the girl's family found out about their relationship, it led to a quarrel between the families following which the victim's son left the village.

According to police, the girl's family was planning to get her married and Manjunath returned to his village last week and eloped with the girl.

Subsequently, the girl's family members dragged the woman onto the streets and tied her to an electric pole with rope. She was assaulted by a group of women and three other men also encouraged them in the act.

Later, a few villagers gathered there and objected to it. They advised the accused women and men to leave Manjunath's mother.

"As soon as we received information about the incident, our police team rushed to the spot and took the woman to hospital for treatment. She sustained only minor injuries on her hands and was discharged later," a senior police officer said. *—PTI*

Time to choose new PM to correct politics of country, says Priyanka

DAVANGERE, 4 MAY

Accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of bringing down the dignity of the office he holds through his speeches during the election campaign, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday said that it is time to choose a new Prime Minister to "correct" the politics of the country.

At an election rally here, she also targeted Modi for campaigning in favour of suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna, who is facing changes of sexual abuse.

Priyanka Gandhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Referring to Prajwal's case, she said, "But today, our Prime Minister comes on the stage with such a leader who has sexually abused several women, and seeks votes in his name."

'Shahenshaah' vs 'Shehzada'

Priyanka on Saturday called Modi a 'shahanshaah' (king of king) who lives in a palace but is cut off from the public, responding to his 'shehzada' jibe for her brother Rahul Gandhi. She also accused Modi of using the people of Gujarat for power and then forgetting them. "He calls my brother 'shehzada'. I would like to tell him that this shehzada walked for 4,000 km to listen to people's problems, met farmers and labourers and asked how we can resolve their problems," she said. *—PTI*

New video shows BJP man denying Sandeshkhali rapes

KOLKATA, 4 MAY

The Sandeshkhali issue saw a big twist on Saturday when a video surfaced showing a BJP leader in the village claiming that no rapes or sexual harassment had taken place.

TMC earlier in the day released a video on social media, in which a man, claimed to be Gangadhar Kayl who is a BJP mandal president in Sandeshkhali, was heard saying that leader of the Opposition in West Bengal assembly "Suvendu Adhikari is behind the whole conspiracy".

He said women were convinced to file such complaints at the directions of Adhikari.

In the video, Kayl, can be heard saying that BJP had convinced the women—who were protesting against grabbing of land by Sheikh Shahjahan, that the TMC leader would not be arrested until such allegations were made.

Kayl claimed that instructions for this were given by Adhikari. TMC laeder Abhisekh Banerjee accused BJP of orchestrating the Sandeshkhali. While Adhikari said the video is doctored, Kayl lodged a complaint to CBI alleging that it was a morphed and edited video. *—PTI*

5 jawans hurt after terrorists fire on vehicles in J&K

JAMMU, 4 MAY

Five security personnel were injured after terrorists opened fire on two vehicles, including one belonging to the Indian Air Force (IAF), in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Saturday, officials said.

The attack took place near Shashidhar in the evening when the vehicles were moving towards Sanai Top in the district's Surankote area, they said. Five soldiers were injured and the condition of two is critical. They were taken to a hospital, the officials said. Reinforcements from the army and police have been rushed to the area and a massive search has been launched to track down the terrorists. *—PTI*

OVER KHALISTAN CONCERNS

'India influenced Canadian politics'

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

PHOTO: PTI

- India was mentioned 43 times in the 194-page report.

Indian officials, including Canada-based proxies, engage in a range of activities that seek to influence Canadian communities and politicians to "align" Ottawa's position with New Delhi's interests on key issues, particularly concerns over Khalistani separatists in Canada, an official probe has found.

The findings in the interim report by Commissioner Marie-Josee Hogue, who is leading the independent public inquiry, found evidence of foreign interference in Canada's last two federal elections in 2019 and 2021 but the results of the votes were not affected and the electoral system was robust.

India has previously rejected as "baseless" the allegations of its interference in Canadian elections and asserted that the core issue has been Ottawa's meddling in New Delhi's internal affairs.

The report, published on Friday said the People's Republic of China ("PRC") stands out as the main perpetrator of foreign interference against Canada.

"China has been assessed by Canadian authorities as the most active foreign state actor engaged in interference directed at government officials, political organisations, candidates for political office and diaspora communities," it said.

India's interest in Canada relates to Canada's large South Asian community. India views part of these communities as fostering an anti-India sentiment, and represents a threat to India's stability and national security, it said.

"India does not differentiate between lawful, pro-Khalistani political advocacy and the relatively small Canada-based Khalistani violent extremism. It views anyone aligned with Khalistani separatism as a seditious threat to India," the report said.

The Canadian probe report said that the targets of Indian foreign interference are often members of the Indo-Canadian communities, but prominent non-Indo-Canadians are also subject to India's foreign influence activities. These activities may not be directed at influencing Canada's democratic institutions, but are still significant, it said. *—PTI*

GOVT LIFTS ONION EXPORT BAN; IMPOSES $550 MSP

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The government on Saturday lifted the ban on onion exports but imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of USD 550 per tonne, amid ongoing Lok Sabha elections. On Friday night, government had imposed a 40 per cent duty on export of onions. In August last year, India had imposed a 40 per cent export duty on onions up to 31 December, 2023. "The export policy of onions is amended from prohibited to free subject to MEP of USD 550 per metric ton with immediate effect and until further orders," the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification. On 8 December, 2023, the government banned export of onions from 31 March this year. In March, the export prohibition was extended till further orders. According to Union Agriculture Ministry data, onion production in 2023-24 (First Advance Estimates) is expected to be around 254.73 lakh tonnes compared to around 302.08 lakh tonnes last year. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

PHOTO: PTI

Mumbai to witness high sea waves till Sunday night

MUMBAI, 4 MAY

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Saturday issued an advisory cautioning people against entering the Arabian Sea amid warnings about high tide till Sunday night. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and Indian National Centre for Ocean Information (INCOIS), the sea will witness a "swell of surge waves" from 11.30am on Saturday to 11.30pm on Sunday, the civic body said. *—PTI*

Afghan diplomat resigns post gold smuggling row

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Zakia Wardak, the senior-most Afghan diplomat in India, has resigned from her position after reports emerged that she was caught at Mumbai airport last month for allegedly trying to smuggle 25kg of gold worth Rs 18.6 crore from Dubai. Wardak had taken charge as the acting ambassador of Afghanistan to New Delhi since late last year after working as the Afghan Consul General in Mumbai for over two years. *—PTI*

Cheetah rescued after straying into R'than from Kuno

BHOPAL, 4 MAY

A cheetah from Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district strayed into neighbouring Rajasthan and was rescued on Saturday under "challenging conditions" involving a ravine and a huge crowd of onlookers, a forest department official said. Male cheetah Pawan was rescued from Karoli district in the western state under challenging conditions, said a release issued from the office of Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (APCCF) and Director Lion Project." *—PTI*

Mumbai bags 2nd ISL title with 3-1 comeback win

Mumbai City FC players celebrate after winning ISL final match over Mohun Bagan Super Giants **PHOTO: X/@MUMBAICITYFC**

KOLKATA, 4 MAY

Bipin Singh came to haunt Mohun Bagan once again as a gritty Mumbai City FC rode on the midfielder's strike to secure a stunning 3-1 comeback win and grab the ISL title for a second time in front of a partisan Salt Lake Stadium crowd here on Saturday.

In front of 62,007-strong crowd, the home side roared into the lead with Jason Cummings (44th) strike at the stroke of half-time. But the Islanders levelled things up when Jorge Pereyra Diaz (53rd) silenced the crowd from Alberto Noguera's magnificent straight pass from the midfield. *—PTI*

>>>Continued on Page 8

CLAIMS INDIA

'Online radicalisation risks global security'

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Underlining that there can be no distinction between "good terrorism and bad terrorism", India has said online radicalisation continues to pose a significant challenge to global security.

Heading the Indian delegation at the recently-concluded 19th Interpol Conference of Heads of National Central Bureaux at France's Lyon, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director Praveen Sood highlighted the challenges posed by the nexus between organised crime, terrorism and extremist ideologies.

Sood said online radicalisation poses a significant challenge to global security.

Praveen Sood highlighted the challenges posed by the nexus between organised crime, terrorism and extremist ideologies **PHOTO: PTI**

The event was attended by the national central bureaux of 136 countries, represented by senior police officials, according to a statement issued by the CBI.

The National Central Bureau (NCB) in each country is the nodal organisation responsible for coordination with Interpol. In India, the CBI is the designated NCB.

The aim of the event was to strengthen the operational cooperation among the NCBs of Interpol to combat transnational crimes.

"During the event, the Indian delegation held discussions with law-enforcement agencies from multiple countries for enhanced coordination on Interpol channels for a concerted action to combat organised crime, terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering, online radicalisation, cyber-enabled financial crimes and to prevent these crimes on a real-time basis," the statement said. *—PTI*

Accused in love jihad case shot at during encounter

HUBBALLI, 4 MAY

A suspect in a "love jihad" case was apprehended in Dharwad after sustaining a gunshot wound to the leg during a police encounter on Saturday. The individual, identified as 19-year-old Saddam Hussain Limbuwale from Eshwarnagar, Hubballi had been in look out by the police authorities for following allegations on the charges of raping a minor girl resulting in her pregnancy. During his arrest, Hussain reportedly attempted to assault Inspector Sangamesh and Constable Arun with a knife in a bid to flee. In response, the police resorted to firing, resulting in Hussain sustaining a gunshot wound to the leg. Upon resisting his advances, the accused allegedly threatened her with severe repercussions. Amidst allegations from the victim's family and Hindu organisations claiming it to be a case of "love jihad," demands for stringent action. *—Salar News*

Man arrested for trying to smuggle ₹50 lakh

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

A 22-year-old male passenger who was travelling to Bangkok was arrested here for allegedly attempting to smuggle foreign and Indian currency notes worth over Rs 50 lakh, officials said on Saturday. Based on specific intelligence that a Chennai-based man was going to travel by Thai Lion Airlines flight from Bengaluru to Bangkok, he was intercepted by the officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on 29 April, they said. According to the DRI officials, the examination of the hand baggage of the passenger revealed that the concealment of assorted foreign currency (US Dollar, Thai Baht, Malaysian Ringgit) with the equivalent value of Rs 49.82 lakh and Indian currency of Rs 45,000, totally amounting Rs 50.27 lakh that was being attempted to be smuggled out of India by the alleged passenger. The currency notes were seized, and the passenger was arrested. *—PTI*

Mysuru man booked for raping niece

MYSURU, 4 MAY

A man was booked for allegedly raping his sister's minor daughter in Nanjangud on Friday. Police said, the accused had lured the 16-year-old girl under the pretext of taking her to tuition classes. The case was registered based on a complaint filed by the girl's mother. The incident took place on 24 April. The accused has reportedly fled the scene. Police has registered a case against the accused under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The accused is involved in multiple sexual assault cases. According to the complaint, on 24 April, the accused drove the girl to his residence, claiming he would drop her off for tuition and allegedly raped her. He warned her not to disclose the incident to anyone and even handed her a mobile phone to maintain secrecy. *—Salar News*

Prajwal to get CBI's Blue Corner Notice

CM held a meeting with SIT, during which he instructed immediate arrest of Prajwal

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday was informed by offices of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged sex scandal involving Prajwal Revanna that there is a possibility of CBI issuing a "Blue Corner Notice", against Hasssan MP.

Siddaramaiah held an "important meeting" with SIT officials, during which he instructed that immediate action be taken to arrest Prajwal.

"We will proceed for arrest with appropriate measures. There is a possibility of CBI issuing a Blue Corner Notice, which will speed up the investigation," the officials told the CM"SIT officials have assured that they will arrest and get the accused back, as soon as they get the information from the airports," it said.

The SIT is said to have sent a request to the CBI, the nodal body for Interpol matters in India, seeking a Blue Corner Notice against Prajwal Revanna, official sources said. "Once CBI issues this notice, SIT hopes to get information about whereabouts of Prajwal." Prajwal, 33, who is grandson of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda and elder brother of former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy was BJP-JD(S) alliance's candidate from Hassan, which went to the polls on 26 April.

Explicit video clips allegedly involving Prajwal had started making the rounds in Hassan in recent days, following which the State government constituted SIT to probe the scandal. The second FIR was filed against Prajwal Revanna, this time by CID on Wednesday based on a complaint by a JD(S) party worker, who alleged she was raped by Prajwal at gunpoint.

Prajwal is said to have flown abroad on 27 April, a day after the first phase of Lok Sabha polls in Karnataka was held. His advocate had sought for seven days' time for him to appear before the SIT, to which the investigating team has replied it is not possible as there is no such provision. *—PTI*

Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: PTI*

We will proceed for arrest with appropriate measures. There is a possibility of CBI issuing a Blue Corner Notice, which will speed up the investigation.

-SIT

- The second FIR was filed against Prajwal Revanna, by a complaint by a JD(S) party worker, who alleged she was raped by Prajwal at gunpoint

What is Blue Corner Notice?

According to the Interpol there are seven types of notices issued by Interpol: Red Notice, Yellow Notice, Blue Notice, Black Notice, Green Notice, Orange Notice, and Purple Notice. A blue corner notice also known as an "enquiry notice" allows police forces in member countries to share critical crime-related information such as obtaining a person's criminal record, and location and having his or her identity verified among others. For instance, in January 2020, Interpol issued a blue corner notice to help locate fugitive self-styled godman Nithyananda. In June 2019 a blue corner notice was issued by Interpol against Bengaluru based I Monetary Advisory jewels founder Mansoor Khan, who is accused of perpetrating financial fraud running into several crores of rupees. *—Salar News*

Support all victims: Rahul in letter to CM

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has written to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, urging him to extend all possible help to the victims of JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna's exploits.

In a letter to Siddaramaiah, Gandhi condemned the actions of Revanna, and accused him of enjoying immunity with the blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. In a veiled attack on Modi, Gandhi said he has never come across a senior public representative who has constantly chosen silence in the face of untold violence against women.

"I request you to kindly extend all possible support to the victims," Gandhi said in his letter to Siddaramaiah.

"Many who looked up to him as a brother and son were brutalised in the most violent manner and robbed of their dignity. The rape of our mothers and sisters warrants the strictest possible punishment. They deserve our compassion and solidarity as they fight their battle for justice. We have a collective duty to ensure that all parties responsible for these heinous crimes are brought to book," he added.

"I am deeply shocked to learn that our Home Minister Shri Amit Shah was informed by G Devaraje Gowda about Prajwal Revanna's antecedents, especially his history of sexual violence," the former Congress chief said. He said what is even more shocking is that despite these gruesome allegations being brought to the notice Modi campaigned and canvassed for a "mass rapist".Gandhi said the Union government wilfully allowed him to flee India to derail any meaningful investigation. *—PTI*

BJP: Women, girls have no protection under Cong

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

BJP on Saturday slammed the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government over the law and order situation in Karnataka and alleged that young girls and women had no protection.

Sharing a newsreport where a minor Dalit girl was allegedly impregnated by a youth in Hubballi, BJP took to social media platform to condemn the incident. On 'X', BJP alleged that the minor girl was "raped by a fanatic" and that there is no "protection for Hindu young women and girls in Hubballi." "Hindu young women are today victims of the mistake of giving power to terrorists, rapists, fanatic Jhihadists called brothers @ INCKarnataka like the Kerala files," the party alleged in the post.

Meanwhile, a youth has been arrested for allegedly impregnating minor girl in Hubballi, police said. Citing the recent murder case of Congress Councillor Niranjan Hiremath's 23-year-old daughter Neha, who was stabbed to death inside her college campus in Hubballi, BJP attacked the state government over the investigation in the case. The case is being probed by the State's Criminal Investigation Department. *—PTI*

DKS questions HDK's stand

Bengaluru, 4 May

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar raised questions regarding the consistent changes in stance by JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy concerning Hassan 'pen drive' scandal involving HD Revanna and Prajwal Revanna Shivakumar criticised Kumaraswamy and his family for their shifting positions on the matter, expressing surprise at the frequent changes in statements. *—Salar News*

NATURE'S CRY

Hundreds of fish were found floating dead at a pond in the early hours in Jayamahal park, Bengaluru on Saturday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

MIA receives bomb threat, security tightened

MANGALURU, 4 MAY

Security has been beefed up at Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) after the airport authorities received an email about a bomb scare, police said on Saturday.

Following the threat received on 29 April, CISF and the police got into multiple levels of security sweeps all over the airport.A First Information Report has been registered in Bajpe police station stating that a certain group identifying itself as 'Terrorisers 111' had sent the emails. FIR quoting the email has stated that "there are explosives placed in three places in the airport and we expect large scale bloodshed will happen. This warning and threat should not be taken lightly."

Commissioner of police of Mangaluru city Anupam Aggarwal has confirmed that the FIR has been registered.

According to sources, the MIA along with over 30 other Airport Authority of India and private airports received a bomb threat on mail on 30 April, 2024. The mail was sent to 90+ email IDs of airports and security agencies - CISF.

According to the Indian Airports Manual, airport security machinery anywhere in the country takes up total search operations and ramps up security sweep. The standard protocol is followed every time when such threats surface.The 'terrorisers 111' has used the email address of the airports that is notified on the public websites of the airports. *—Salar News*

Special trains for North K'taka voters

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

Special trains have been arranged by the South Western Railway (SWR) for voters from North Karnataka residing in Bengaluru and Mysuru to facilitate voters to travel to their hometowns on 6 and 7 May.

These trains aim to manage passenger traffic during the summer vacation period while also enabling convenient travel for voting. Train No. 07373/07374, will run from Mysuru to Talaguppa on 6 May and return on 7 May. Additionally, special express trains like the Sir M Visvesvaraya Bengaluru - Vijayapura - SMVT Bangalore Express Special and Yeshwantpur-Bidar-Yeshwantpur Express Special have been scheduled for one trip each. *—SalarNews*

AMID SOARING HEAT

Chamarajanagar: Deficient rains bring trouble to coconut growers

CHAMARAJANAGAR, 4 MAY

Deficient rainfall and the soaring heat have left coconut growers in Chamarajanagar hard and dry. As a result, coconut trees are succumbing to the harsh summer conditions.

The farmers, who depend on these trees for their livelihood, find themselves helpless as they struggle to provide essential water and nutrients to sustain their crops amidst the water scarcity.

According to the Horticulture Department, Chamarajanagar is home to approximately 12.7 lakh coconut trees, serving as a primary source of income for horticulture farmers. However, the current weather conditions have taken a toll on these trees, causing them to shed their fronds and exhibit signs of distress. The phenomenon is called "balding."

It is not confined to specific areas but is prevalent across various villages in the district, including Maleyur, Udigala, Moodlupur in Chamarajanagar taluk, as well as Kabbahalli, Padugur, Lakkur in Gundlupet taluk. In these regions, coconut trees are on the verge of collapse.

Coconut trees require a substantial amount of water about 40 to 80 litres per day, especially during the summer. However, with water sources depleting rapidly, farmers are struggling to meet this demand, leading to the deteriorating health of their coconut plantations.The Horticulture Department emphasizes on adopting various measures such as mulching, drip irrigation, and pest control. These strategies aim to conserve water and optimize its utilization, thereby ensuring the survival of coconut trees amidst challenging environmental conditions. Moreover, stakeholders in the agricultural sector have urged the government to provide assistance and compensation to affected farmers. *—Salar News*

BWSSB builds 986 rainwater wells to tackle water crisis

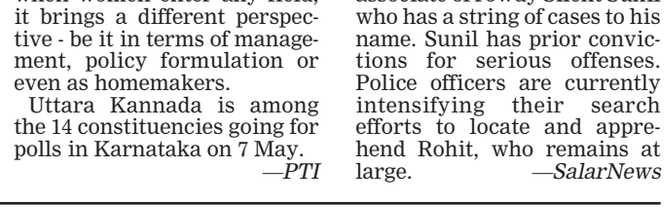
Bengaluru, 4 May

Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has taken proactive steps towards rainwater harvesting by constructing 986 rainwater wells across the City before the onset of rains. The initiative aims to address the water scarcity issue faced in the city not solely due to the lack of Cauvery water but also because of the depletion of groundwater sources. *—Salar News*

City, State anticipate heavy rainfall

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

The State Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted light to moderate rainfall in the City for over the next three days, with heavy rainfall anticipated after 7 and 8 May. The forecast, sourced from Global Forecast System (GFS), indicates heavy rains in the State, including Bengaluru. Intermittent showers are likely until 19 May, with three consecutive weeks of rainfall anticipated thereafter. The drought-affected State is expected to receive sustained rainfall over the next three weeks. jected uptick in rainfall across south interior Karnataka. *—Salar News*



BBMP workers clear fallen branches on Saturday after Friday's rain *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Rao assures Covishield safety amid concerns

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

State Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao reassured the public not to panic over Covid Shield vaccine side effects. Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Dinesh Gundu Rao said, "A review has been conducted in this regard by the health department only a handful of those who received the Covid Shield vaccine in Karnataka had serious health problems and there should not be any panic over the Covidshield."

Gundurao acknowledged that while some individuals have experienced side effects, these occurrences are limited. He urged people not to fear adverse reactions and important to understand to distinguish between vaccine-related issues and pre-existing health conditions.

Addressing concerns raised by a small number of individuals experiencing health problems post-vaccination in Karnataka, Gundurao highlighted that the State health department is actively investigating these cases. While acknowledging a handful of serious incidents, he underscored the need for careful assessment to determine whether these are directly linked to the vaccine or are attributable to other health factors.

Gundurao said that the State government is waiting for the Central's response regarding the vaccine and once when the State gets a clear guidance then we can assure the public that Karnataka is closely monitoring the situation and will continue to investigate any reported health issues associated with Covidshield vaccine. *—Salar News*

IN UTTARA KANNADA

Gynaecologist to 'deliver' LS seat to Cong?

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

BJP leader Anantkumar Hegde represented Uttara Kannada Lok Sabha segment in Karnataka for six terms and now gynecologist Anjali Nimbalkar is putting up a spirited fight seeking to turn the tide and "deliver" it for Congress.

Dr Nimbalkar is taking on former Karnataka Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, who replaced Hegde, in this BJP stronghold. A former Congress MLA, she lost the Assembly elections from Khanapur in Belagavi district last year.

The 62-year-old Kageri, a six-term MLA and a former minister, was also defeated in the Assembly polls from Sirsi.

"In the past 30 years, the voice of Uttara Kannada was not spoken and not even a single question was asked in the Parliament," Nimbalkar said in an apparent dig at Hegde.

If elected, she said her focus is to address the local issues related to forest dwellers, getting them "patra" for their own land -- a battle they have been fighting for long.

Also on her priority list is getting a multispecialty hospital in Kumta as per people's demand, generating employment and focusing on tourism for the overall development of Uttara Kannada.

Noting that Uttara Kannada has a combination of both beaches and temples, Nimbalkar said the district can be developed internationally in a much higher scale than "what actually Goa or Kerala is." She is also banking on the five guarantee schemes launched by Siddaramaiah-led government in Karnataka and the promises made by party in its manifesto at national level.

She strongly believes that when women enter any field, it brings a different perspective - be it in terms of management, policy formulation or even as homemakers.

Uttara Kannada is among the 14 constituencies going for polls in Karnataka on 7 May. *—PTI*

Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri and Dr Nimbalkar *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

- Her priority list is getting a multispecialty hospital in Kumta, generating employment and focusing on tourism

Criminal escapes from DCP's office

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

A rowdy-sheeter, Rohit alias Onte (camel) Rohit, managed to escape from the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) (DCP) on Saturday. Rohit, was wanted by the SubramanyaNagar police station, and he had been summoned to furnish a bond under Section 110 of the IPC.

Rohit arrived at the DCP's office from the police station, Rohit spotted the officers of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) police in the vicinity and took to his heels.

Police said Rohit is a close associate of rowdy Silent Sunil who has a string of cases to his name. Sunil has prior convictions for serious offenses. Police officers are currently intensifying their search efforts to locate and apprehend Rohit, who remains at large. *—SalarNews*

PMLA court reserves verdict on Soren's bail plea

RANCHI , 4 MAY

A Special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Court in Ranchi on Saturday reserved its verdict on the bail plea of former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a land scam case. The court will give its verdict on 10 May. On Saturday, both parties filed written replies. Soren's criminal writ petition challenging his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate was dismissed by the High Court here on Friday. The court had reserved the decision in the case on 28 February. Earlier, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Soren's plea seeking interim relief in a money laundering case. In February, the High Court reserved its decision on Soren's plea challenging his arrest. Soren, in his plea, has claimed that his arrest was unwarranted and his remand in the matter was arbitrary and illegal. Hemant Soren, who has filed the petition through advocate Pragya Baghel, called his arrest illegal and malafide.—*ANI*

Cong leader found dead in TN, police launch probe

TIRUNELVELI, 4 MAY

A district Congress leader was found dead here on Saturday, police said. The half burnt body of KPK Jayakumar Dhanasingh was found at his farm, police said. The incident comes in the wake of the victim claiming threat to his life recently. Dhanasingh was the head of Congress' Tirunelveli (East) unit. Police said three special teams have been formed to crack the case. Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) Chief K Selvaperunthagai condoled the death of his party colleague and recalled his contributions to the party. —*PTI*

MP MLA 'threatens' cop for switching off Chouhan's mic

BHOPAL, 4 MAY

A BJP legislator in Madhya Pradesh lost his cool and allegedly threatened a policeman after he switched off the mic of former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during a public rally citing the model code of conduct. As a video of the incident, which took place on Thursday night, went viral on social media, Congress filed a complaint with Election Commission, demanding action against the ex-CM for flouting the model code. BJP has nominated the former chief minister from Vidisha, which will go to polls in the third phase on 7 May. Chouhan took a pause and said there was still some time left before the deadline by pointing to his watch. In the meantime, Bhojpur MLA Surendra Patwa lost his cool, saying he was also keeping track of the time. He then screamed at the police official: "Aisi jagah fikvaunga ki pata bhi nahi chalega (will get you thrown to such a place that you won't even know)." —*PTI*

2 M'rashtra MLAs eye maiden term from Solapur seat

SOLAPUR, 4 MAY

The fight for the Solapur Lok Sabha seat in Maharashtra is between two sitting MLAs who are trying their fortunes for the first time in parliamentary politics. Congress candidate and former Maharashtra chief minister Sushilkumar Shinde's daughter Praniti Shinde is a three-time MLA from the Solapur City Central assembly constituency while BJP nominee Ram Satpute represents the Malshiras assembly segment. Praniti is the third member of the Shinde family who is contesting the election from the Solapur Lok Sabha seat. Her father represented this constituency thrice - in 1998, 1999 and 2009, but he could not win the election in 2014 and 2019. In 2004, her mother Ujwala Shinde contested the seat unsuccessfully. Polling for this seat will be held in the third phase on 7 May. —*PTI*

Pak wants 'shehzada' to be India's PM, says Modi

Cong in reply to Modi says Rahul Gandhi is 'shahidzada'

PALAMU/GUMLA, 4 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jharkhand BJP President Babulal Marandi, party leader and candidate from Lohardaga Samir Oraon during an election rally at Sisai in Gumla district on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asserted his government's surgical and air strikes had shaken Pakistan, and the neighbouring country's leaders are now praying that the Congress "shehzada" becomes India's Prime Minister.

Modi, addressing a poll rally in Palamu, took a dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi without taking his name, and said Pakistan might want him as prime minister, but India wants "a strong country with a strong Prime Minister".

Objecting to the language used by Modi, Congress said that Rahul is actually "shahidzada (martyr's son)" and not "shehzada" (crown prince).

While campaigning for BJP candidate of Palamu, Modi said, "Maa Bharati's disrespect won't be tolerated anymore. New India's surgical and air strikes shook Pakistan, which was known for supporting terror attacks on India during Congress regime."

Earlier, Congress-led governments were "helpless" after any terror attack on the country, he claimed.

"But this new India knows how to enter enemy territory and strike... Shaken by the surgical and air strikes, leaders in Pakistan are now praying that the Congress 'shehzada' becomes PM of India... But, our strong nation wants a strong government and leader," Modi said.

The situation is such now that Pakistan is "seeking help from the world to save the nation", the PM said.

He urged the electorate to recognise the importance of one vote, "which contributed to building the Ram Temple after generations struggled for 500 years, as well as the scrapping of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir...The entire world saluted the power of democracy in India."

Modi said 25 crore people came out of poverty in the last 10 years of the NDA government.

Modi targets Lalu on Godhra incident

Modi on charged RJD President Lalu Prasad, BJP's principal opponent in Bihar, with having tried to "shield" those guilty in two-decade-old Godhra train burning incident and "put blame on kar sevaks".

Addressing an election rally at Darbhanga, Modi, who was then the chief minister of Gujarat where riots had erupted after the incident, also alleged that the RJD supremo had acted in connivance with the Congress, which headed the UPA, in power at the Centre.This is probably the first time Modi raised the Godhra issue during the ongoing elections. —*PTI*

CITES LACK OF PARTY FUNDING

Congress' Puri candidate Mohanty opts out of polls

BHUBANESWAR, 4 MAY

Sucharita Mohanty *PHOTO: PTI*

Congress candidate from Puri Lok Sabha constituency Sucharita Mohanty has declined to contest the elections and returned the party ticket alleging lack of funding from the party.

Mohanty, daughter of former Congress MP Brajamohan Mohanty in a mail to AICC General Secretary (organization) KC Venugopal on Friday claimed that her campaign in Puri has been hit hard because the party has denied funding.

She alleged that AICC Odisha in-charge Ajoy Kumar "categorically" asked her to fight from her own resources.

"I was a salaried professional journalist who entered electoral politics 10 years ago. I have given all I have into my campaign in Puri. I tried a public donation drive to support my campaign for progressive politics without much success so far. I also tried to cut down the projected campaign spending to the minimum," she said.

As she was not able to raise funds on her own, the Congress leader had approached all senior leaders including the party's central leadership for funds for an impactful campaign in the Puri Lok Sabha constituency.

However, Mohanty said she will remain a loyal Congress worker and her leader is Rahul Gandhi.

Speaking to media people, Mohanty said "I was denied funds from the party. In Assembly segments under the Puri Lok Sabha constituency, weak candidates were given tickets. BJP and BJD are sitting on mountains of money. Vulgar displays of wealth are everywhere. It was difficult for me to fight the election."

She said she wanted a people-oriented campaign but that was also not possible with the lack of funds. The party is also not responsible for that as BJP government has crippled the party. There are a lot of curbs on expenditure and many bank accounts have been frozen, she added.

—*PTI*

'MANIFESTO TALKS OF JIZYA'

Yogi attacks Cong manifesto, likens it to Aurangzeb's rule

BHOPAL, 4 MAY

Yogi Adityanath also accused Congress of wanting to snatch the quota benefits backward classes to please "its vote bank" *PHOTO: PTI*

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said the Congress manifesto talked of 'jizya' (tax imposed on non-Muslims in medieval India) and promotion of cow slaughter and likened it to the "cruel rule of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb".

He also accused Congress of wanting to snatch the quota benefits of SC, STs and Other Backward Classes to please "its vote bank".

Addressing a rally in Ashok Nagar town of Guna Lok Sabha constituency in support of BJP candidate and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, he hailed the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing respect to faith, bringing welfare schemes for the poor and honour to the country.

"You have heard the name of a cruel Mughal ruler called Aurangzeb. Decent Muslim families don't name their children after him. He levied jizya. What is it? It is inheritance tax being talked about by the Congress," Adityanath claimed.

On the other hand, Modi says heritage should be respected as our movement for Ram temple in Ayodhya continued for 500 years and lakhs of Hindus were martyred, Adityanath told the gathering.

Adityanath claimed the Congress wants to give minorities all freedom to eat and drink as per their choice and then went on to link it to cow slaughter and beef consumption.

"Terrorism and Naxalism were at their peak before 2014. But now Pakistan comes forward with a clarification even if a firecracker bursts in India. This is new India. We are not aggressors but we don't spare those who make a move against us," Adityanath said.

—*PTI*

Chess legend Kasparov clears air after his remark on Rahul

New Delhi, 4 May

Kasparov and Rahul *PHOTO: PTI*

Russian chess great Garry Kasparov hoped that his "little joke" on Indian politics does not pass for "advocacy or expertise" after his cheeky social media post on Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's love for the game went viral.

Within hours of asking Gandhi to "first win Rae Bareli before challenging for the top", the 61-year-old said it was just a joke and should be seen as one. "I very much hope my little joke does not pass for advocacy or expertise in Indian politics! But as an 'all-seeing monster with 1000 eyes,' as I was once described, I cannot fail to see a politician dabbling in my beloved game!" the former world champion, who retired in 2005, wrote in response to a post by actor Ranvir Shorey.

Shorey's comment appeared to be a dig at Gandhi's recent assertion that he was the best chess player among all Indian politicians. Kasparov gave the same reply to a few other accounts which commented on his original post. The Congress recently shared a video of Gandhi playing chess on his mobile phone while on the Lok Sabha election campaign trail. The MP from Wayanad named Kasparov as his favourite chess player and drew parallels between the game and politics. —*PTI*

Amit Shah *PHOTO: PTI*

Criminal conspiracy charges to be added to FIR in Shah case

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Criminal conspiracy charges have been added to FIR registered in connection with the doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's speech, the Delhi Police said on Saturday, a day after it arrested a national coordinator of Congress' social media team.

Arun Beereddy, a native of Telangana's Hyderabad, who handled "Spirit of Congress" account on X, was arrested from Delhi on Friday, police said. This is the first arrest made by the Delhi Police in the case.

Beereddy is among the prominent members of Congress' social media team and he is accused of being among those who uploaded the doctored video on social media and also shared it with other members of the party, according to officials.

Following his arrest, he was produced before a court here on Friday night and it sent him to three days in custody for further interrogation by the police's Special Cell.

Congress MP Manickam Tagore who is Telangana Congress in-charge alleged that the arrest was a misuse of power by the Union government.

In a post on X, Tagore said "Our Telangana colleague Arun Reddy, has been detained by Delhi Police for 24 hours with no information or FIR disclosed. We demand the immediate release of Arun. This authoritarian misuse of power by the regime is condemnable. #ReleaseSpiritOfCongress, #ReleaseArunReddy."

According to police sources, those summoned include six members of the ruling Congress in Telangana, including Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. They, along with other persons from several states, were asked to appear for questioning on 1 May at IFSO unit in Delhi's Dwarka.CrPC Section 160 allows police to summon a person for investigation, while Section 91 allows police to seek specific documents or gadgets to be presented as evidence.

—*PTI/ANI*

Police set up team to probe allegations against WB Guv

KOLKATA, 4 MAY

West Bengal Police have formed a separate team to probe molestation allegations against Governor CV Ananda Bose, made by a woman employee at Raj Bhavan, officials said on Saturday.

"An inquiry team has been constituted. We will be speaking to some probable witnesses over the next few days. Have requested CCTV footage, if available," said Indira Mukherjee, Deputy Commissioner, Central Division, Kolkata Police.

An employee at the Raj Bhavan on Thursday alleged that she was sexually harassed by Bose. Following allegations, he issued a statement on Thursday banning the entry of the police and Minister of State for Finance Chandrima Bhattacharya into the Raj Bhavan premises of Kolkata, Darjeeling, and Barrackpore.

—*ANI*

Ex-Delhi Cong chief, others join BJP

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Arvinder Singh Lovely *PHOTO: PTI*

Former Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely joined BJP on Saturday along with a few other leaders, including former city government minister Raj Kumar Chauhan and former MLAs Neeraj Basoya and Naseeb Singh.

All the former Congress leaders slammed the opposition party's alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi for the Lok Sabha polls as they joined BJP in the presence of Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and party general secretary Vinod Tawde.

Lovely hailed BJP leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for giving him and his colleagues the opportunity to join the party when they felt lost.

He asserted that Modi is set to retain power with a big majority in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

Lovely had recently quit as Delhi Congress President protesting the party's alliance with the AAP.

It is believed that he and some other leaders were also upset with their party's choice of candidates, including Kanhaiya Kumar and Udit Raj, in the national capital for the elections.

—*PTI*

ADR REPORT STATES

21% candidates in 4th phase are declared criminals

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

A total of 360 candidates have declared criminal cases against them *PHOTO: PTI*

Out of the 1,710 candidates contesting in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha polls, 21 per cent have declared criminal cases against themselves and 24 candidates have declared zero assets, as per the Association for Democratic Reforms report.

The ADR and The National Election Watch analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 1710 out of 1717 candidates, who are contesting in the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 Phase IV on 13 May.

A total of 360 candidates have declared criminal cases against them. Emphasising the disparities amongst the financial backgrounds of the candidates with the richest candidate in the fray is Dr Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani of Telugu Desam Party with assets over Rs. 5,700 crore.

Among the 360 candidates (21 per cent) with criminal cases, 17 candidates were convicted, 11 declared cases related to murder, 30 face charges of attempted murder and 50 candidates have criminal cases related to crimes against women, with 5 candidates facing charges of rape, the data showed.

The ADR findings also shed light on the distribution of candidates with criminal backgrounds across major political parties.

Among the major parties, three out of three candidates from AIMIM, two out of three candidates from Shiv Sena, 10 out of 17 candidates from BRS, 35 out of 61 candidates from Congress, 40 out of 70 candidates from BJP, nine out of 17 candidates from TDP, two out of four candidates from BJD, two out of four candidates from RJD, two out of four candidates from Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), 12 out of 25 candidates from YSRCP, 3 out of eight candidates from All India Trinamool Congress and 7 out of 19 candidates from Samajwadi Party have declared criminal cases against themselves.

In addition to criminal disclosures, the ADR report also highlights significant diversity amongst the candidates' financial backgrounds.

A total of 476 candidates out of 1710 are "crorepatis", with assets exceeding Rs. 1 crore, with Dr Pemmasani being the richest. While, 24 candidates declared zero assets, the report showed.

In response to these findings, the ADR has proposed a series of reforms aimed at curbing the criminalization of politics.

—*PTI*

- Among the 360 candidates with criminal cases, 17 candidates were convicted, 11 declared cases related to murder, 30 face charges of attempted murder and 50 candidates have criminal cases related to crimes against women, with 5 candidates facing charges of rape

- Arun Beereddy, a native of Telangana's Hyderabad, who handled "Spirit of Congress" account on X, was arrested from Delhi on Friday, police said. This is the first arrest made by the Delhi Police

PHOTO: PTI

5 killed in Mussoorie car accident

DEHRADUN, 4 MAY

Five people, including a woman, were killed and another was injured in the early hours of Saturday when their car fell off the road in Uttarakhand's Mussoorie. The car fell about 60 metres down on another road near Jharipani in Mussoorie, an official said. Four men died on the spot while one of the two women seriously injured in the accident succumbed to her injuries during treatment at a nearby hospital. The other injured woman is still under treatment, fire official Dhiraj Singh Tariyal said the victims were mostly students in who had come to Mussoorie on a tripThose killed were identified as Aman Singh Rana ,22, Dingyansh Pratap Bhati,23, Tanuja Rawat 22, Ashutosh Tiwari and Hridayansh Chandra,24, Nayanshri,24, is still under treatment.—*PTI*

4 killed after milk tanker hits tempo, falls into river

THANE, 4 MAY

Four people were killed after a tanker transporting milk hit a tempo and plunged into a river at Malshej ghat in Maharashtra's Thane district, police said on Saturday. The accident occurred near Borande village on the Kalyan-Nagar road around 2 pm on Friday, an official said. The milk tanker and the tempo laden with vegetables were proceeding towards Kalyan from Alephata, inspector Dinkar Chakor of Tokawadi police station in Murbad said. The tanker hit the tempo and fell into a river, he said. A couple travelling in the tanker, its driver and the driver of the tempo, were killed in the accident, while the couple's four-year-old son survived, the official said.The victims, Akshay Dighe ,30, his wife Tejas ,26, and tanker driver Dattatraya Waman,42, were killed on the spot, and tempo driver Shakeel Sheikh,29, died soon after, he said.—*PTI*

Octogenarian woman killed by husband

KOCHI, 4 MAY

A 85-year-old woman, who had been bedridden for some years, was found murdered allegedly by her husband in Muvattupuzha in Ernakulam district, police said on Saturday. The woman - Kathrikutty was suspected to have been murdered by her husband Joseph,86, a native of Vellurkkunnam village. According to the First Information Report (FIR), the accused was taken into custody soon after the incident in the wee hours."We suspect that the man had killed the woman by slitting her throat. According to his statement, he was frustrated over the health condition of the wife," a police officer said.—*PTI*

2 die while cleaning sewage shaft in Noida

NOIDA, 4 MAY

Two sanitation workers from West Bengal died allegedly after inhaling poisonous gases inside a sewage shaft at a house in Noida, police said on Saturday. The incident took place Friday evening when Nooni Mandal and Tapan Mandal were working at one Sumit Chawla's house in Sector 26. Both workers hailed from Malda district in West Bengal and lived in a slum in Sector 9, according to police."A person in Sector 26 had hired two people for cleaning of the septic tank at his home. Last night, while cleaning the tank, the duo became unconscious. They were taken to a hospital but did not survive," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Noida) Vidya Sagar Mishra said.—*PTI*

India not xenophobic: EAM rejects Biden's remark

He said CAA was introduced to show India's welcoming approach

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has rejected recent remarks by US President Joe Biden describing India as "xenophobic" and emphasised that the country has been open and welcoming to people from diverse societies.

Speaking to the Economic Times, Jaishankar also refuted the allegation that the Indian economy was faltering. The Union Minister said that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government showcases India's welcoming approach.

On April 2, Biden had said the "xenophobic" nature of India, China, Japan and Russia is responsible for their economic troubles and argued that America's economy is growing because it welcomes immigrants to its soil. He made the statement while campaigning for his re-election at Washington fundraising event and argued that Japan, along with Russia and China, would perform better economically if the countries embraced immigration more.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that the country had been welcoming to people from diverse societies PHOTO: ANI

He said, " We have the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act), which is to open up doors for people who are in trouble... I think we should be open to people who have the need to come to India, who have a claim to come to India."

Rejecting the criticism of CAA, Jaishankar said, "There are people who publicly said on record that because of CAA, a million Muslims will lose their citizenship in this country." He further said, "Why are they not being held to account? Because nobody has lost citizenship."

During the roundtable on The Economic Times, Jaishankar also spoke on the ongoing anti-Israel protests in American university campuses and criticised a section of the Western media for its biased coverage, suggesting that it is "very ideological" and not "objective" reporting. He said that this section of media wants to shape the global narrative and is targeting India.

Meanwhile, hours after Biden termed India, Japan and other nations, "xenophobic," the White House clarified the President's intentions, emphasising his "respect" for allies and partners. White House Press Secretary Karine Jean Pierre asserted that the President's comments were part of a broader message emphasising the strength derived from America's immigrant heritage. She stressed that Biden's focus remains on bolstering diplomatic relationships with nations such as India and Japan. —*ANI*

FAROOQ CALLS FOR SOLUTION

'Kashmiri Pandit migrants issue is a humanitarian crisis'

JAMMU, 4 MAY

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah has said the issues related to Kashmiri Pandit migrants are not merely a matter of statistics but a humanitarian crisis that demands urgent attention and meaningful solutions.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister accused the BJP of exploiting the Kashmiri migrants' sufferings for political gains, without genuinely addressing their grievances or ensuring their rightful return and resettlement in their homeland.

"The Kashmiri migrants issue is not merely a matter of statistics or political rhetoric, but a humanitarian crisis that demands urgent attention and meaningful solutions," Abdullah said while interacting with a delegation of Kashmiri migrants here on Friday.

The delegation of migrants was headed by former NC MLC and the chairman of the party's minority cell, Bhushan Lal Bhat, who apprised Abdullah of the hardships being faced by the community, according to a release issued by the party.

PHOTO: PTI

Bhat said most of the Kashmiri migrants residing in the Jagti, Purkhoo, Muthi, Buta Nagar and Nagrota camps here as well as those settled in Jammu, Kathua and Udhampur districts are facing problems in the absence of basic amenities for them.

Abdullah criticised the BJP's "divisive rhetoric and discriminatory policies", claiming that the ruling party has only "exacerbated tensions and alienated communities" in the region.

He called for a more inclusive and compassionate approach for resolving the Kashmiri migrants' plight, one that prioritises human dignity, justice and reconciliation. —*ANI*

2016 SUICIDE CASE

Rohith Vemula's family to challenge cops' closure report, meets T'gana CM

HYDERABAD, 3 MAY

The family of Hyderabad University student Rohith Vemula on Friday said it will legally contest the Telangana Police's closure report in his 2016 suicide case.

His brother Raja Vemula claimed the district collector has to decide on the family's Scheduled Caste SC status, prompting the police to say that they will conduct a further investigation.

In its closure report on Rohith Vemula's death, the Telangana Police claimed he was not a Dalit and died by suicide in 2016 as he feared that his "real caste" would be discovered.

Citing the doubts expressed by Rohith Vemula's family, Telangana Director General of Police Ravi Gupta said in a statement late on Friday that a petition will be filed in the court concerned, requesting the magistrate to permit further investigations.

Raja Vemula told news channels that Telangana High Court gave an option to file a 'protest petition' in the lower court.

In its closure report on Rohith Vemula's death, the Telangana Police claimed he was not a Dalit PHOTO: PTI

Whether Rohith Vemula belonged to the SC community or not should come from the district collector of Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, he said and asked how the police can say he was not an SC.

Raja Vemula also said that they plan to meet Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on the matter.

Meanwhile, police chief Gupta said the investigation officer in the case was the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Madhapur, and that the final closure report was prepared before November, based on the investigation conducted.

In its closure report, the police also gave a clean chit to the accused, citing a lack of evidence.

Rohith Vemula's mother meets T'gana CM Revanth Reddy, seeks 'justice'

Rohith Vemula's mother Radhika Vemula met Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy here on Saturday and urged him to see that "justice" is done to the family.

Reddy assured her that an investigation would be conducted again into the University of Hyderabad student's suicide in 2016 and that justice would be done, an official release said

Police have filed a closure report before a local court in its probe into the death of Rohith Vemula, a student of the University of Hyderabad, claiming he was not a Dalit and died by suicide in 2016 as he feared that his "real caste" would be discovered.

A petition will be filed in the court concerned requesting the Magistrate to permit further investigation into the case, he said in a statement on Friday night. —*PTI*

Navy helps Pak crew on Iranian fishing vessel

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Indian Navy has responded to a distress call and provided critical medical assistance to a Pakistani crew member onboard an Iranian fishing vessel Al Rahmani, an Indian Navy spokesperson said.

The warship, INS Sumedha deployed for anti-piracy operations in the Arabian Sea, intercepted fishing vessel Al Rahmani in early hours of 30 April, according to the statement released by Indian Navy Spokesperson on X.

The ship's boarding team and medical specialists boarded the fishing vessel and rendered medical acceptance to the crew member.

The Spokesperson stated, "In a swift response to a distress call,

PHOTO:X

#INSSumedha, mission deployed for #antipiracy ops in the #ArabianSea provided critical medical assistance to an Iranian FV (with 20 Pakistani crew), for a near drowning case of one of its crew member."The Indian Navy Spokesperson said that the patient after medical management was conscious and relieved clinically.

—*ANI*

Court gets 3 months to end paper leak trail

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The Delhi High Court has granted three more months to a trial court to conclude the proceedings in a case relating to the alleged leak of the 2017 Haryana Civil Services (Judicial) preliminary examination paper.

It was earlier directed that the hearing in the matter be taken up on a daily basis.

Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma said the court would appreciate if the principal district and sessions judge, before whom the trial is going on, posts the matter on a day-to-day basis and grants adjournments to the parties only for unavoidable reasons.

The High Court had, in January, asked the trial court to expedite the proceedings in the case and take it up on a daily basis.

PHOTO: PTI

Pursuant to the last order, the trial court judge submitted a letter to the High Court, stating that the case record is voluminous as seven chargesheets have been filed against the accused who are facing trial.

There are 19 accused and 85 witnesses in the case, which is at the stage of defence evidence, the trial court judge said in the letter and sought at least six months for the disposal of the matter.

Special Public Prosecutor Charanjit Singh Bakshi and advocate Amit Sahni, representing the Union Territory of Chandigarh, submitted that despite the High Court's directions, the matter was not taken up on a daily basis and urged the court to direct the trial court to do so.

The High Court, in its order, said the trial court judge's communication indicates that after the last order, the case has moved ahead. —*PTI*

Dead baby on Kochi street was strangulated: Police

KOCHI, 4 MAY

The newborn child, found dead on a street in Kochi after being allegedly thrown there by its mother post delivery, was strangulated according to the post-mortem report, police said on Saturday.

City police Commissioner S Syamsundar said the arrest of the 23-year-old woman, presently hospitalised, was recorded on Friday and police were verifying her statements regarding a friend from Thrissur.Police said the child's skull had also suffered damage, according to the post-mortem report.The woman, suspected to be a victim of sexual assault, concealed her pregnancy, delivered a baby in the early hours of Friday in her apartment bathroom, and allegedly threw the newborn on the street in front of her flat complex situated in a posh residential area in this port city of Kerala.

The woman, who is undergoing treatment, had apparently mentioned about her friend from Thrissur prompting the police to suspect a coercion or a rape angle.The City police Commissioner today said they need to verify her claims.

Hours after the newborn was found dead in 'an' abandoned parcel cover on Friday, police took the woman into custody after tracing the address mentioned on the packet in which the child was wrapped and thrown. —*PTI*

HEAT: YELLOW ALERT ISSUED FOR KERALA

T'PURAM, 4 MAY

The India Meteorological Department on Saturday issued a yellow alert for 12 out of the 14 districts in Kerala due to the likelihood of high temperature and humidity there till 6 May.

IMD said the maximum temperatures were very likely to be around 39 degrees Celsius in Palakkad, around 38 degrees Celsius in Kollam, Thrissur and Kozhikode, around 37 degrees Celsius in Alappuzha, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta and Kannur districts from 4 to 6 May. —*PTI*

ED files money laundering case against Elvish Yadav

LUCKNOW, 4 MAY

The Enforcement Directorate has filed a money laundering case against YouTuber Siddharth Yadav alias Elvish Yadav and some others under the charge of suspected use of snake venom as a recreational drug in parties he hosted, official sources said Saturday.

The central agency has pressed charges under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after taking cognisance of a First Information Report (FIR) and charge sheet filed by the Gautam Buddh Nagar (Noida) district police in Uttar Pradesh last month against him and other linked to him.

The alleged generation of proceeds of crime and use of illicit funds for organising rave or recreational parties is under the scanner of the ED.

Yadav and some others linked to the case will be questioned as part of the investigation, the sources said.

Yadav was arrested on 17 March by the Noida Police in connection with its probe into suspected use of snake venom as a recreational drug in parties that were allegedly hosted by him.

The 26-year-old YouTuber, also the winner of reality show Bigg Boss OTT 2, was booked under various sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, Wildlife Protection Act, and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by the Noida police.

Yadav was among the six people named in an FIR lodged at Noida's Sector 49 Police Station on 3 November last year on a complaint from a representative of animal rights NGO People for Animals (PFA).

The five other accused, all snake charmers, were arrested in November and were later let out on bail by a local court. —*PTI*

'AMAZON OF ALIGARH'

Google pays tribute to wrestler Hamida

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

It was on this day in 1954 when Hamida Banu defeated famed wrestler Baba Pahalwan in just one minute and 34 seconds. While Baba Pahalwan deemed it fit to retire from professional wrestling, Banu's career expanded to international arenas and her victories reported across the globe.

Commemorating Banu's victory and to pay tribute to her as "India's first woman wrestler," Google on Saturday put up a colourful doodle on its homepage.

Born into a family of wrestlers in the early 1900s near Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, Banu grew up wrestling, winning over 300 competitions throughout her career that spanned the 1940s and 1950s at a time when women's participation in athletics was strongly discouraged.

Google on Saturday put up a colourful doodle on its homepage on Hamida Banu, India's first woman wrestler PHOTO: PTI

Banu, however, competed with men anyway, and issued an open challenge to all male wrestlers, wagering her hand in marriage to whoever defeats her, Google wrote in a post.

Banu's success in international matches gained her further acclaim. One of these matches was the one against Russian woman wrestler Vera Chistilin, who she defeated in under two minutes.

Having made newspaper headlines for years, Banu came to be known as the "Amazon of Aligarh".

The bouts she won, her diet, and her training regimen were widely covered.

According to a BBC report, she weighed 108kg and was 5ft 3in tall."Her daily diet included 5.6 litres of milk, 2.8 litres of soup, 1.8 litres of fruit juice, a fowl, nearly 1kg of mutton and almonds, half a kilo of butter, 6 eggs, two big loaves of bread, and two plates of biryani," the British media outlet reported.

Reuters noted that she slept for nine hours and trained for six.Having made newspaper headlines for years, Banu came to be known as the "Amazon of Aligarh".

"Hamida Banu was a trailblazer of her time, and her fearlessness is remembered throughout India and across the world. Outside of her sporting accomplishments, she will always be celebrated for staying true to herself," Google's note read. —*PTI*

SAVE BIRDS CAMPAIGN

School students pose with earthen pots filled with water before hanging them on trees as they participate in 'Save Birds' campaign, in Jammu, on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

44 journalists have been murdered in 15 years: Report

PRESS FREEDOM DAY

The report noted that the violence has increased between 2009 and 2023, with 249 attacks reported ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

Environment journalists worldwide are facing increasing violence, with as many as 44 journalists killed in 15 years, according to a new report released by UNESCO on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, 2024. The killings were highest in Asia and the Pacific with 30 cases, while Latin America and the Caribbean reported 11.

Over 70 per cent of the total 905 journalists and agencies surveyed from 129 countries informed that they had been attacked, threatened or pressured, according to the report Press and Planet in Danger. The report was launched at the 2024 World Press Freedom Day Global Conference being held in Santiago, Chile from 2-4 May, 2024.

The report noted that the violence has increased between 2009 and 2023, with 249 attacks reported. The numbers dropped to 215 between 2014 and 2018. But it showed a stark increase with 305 attacks recorded between 2019 and 2023.

On an average, journalists faced 50 attacks a year between 2009 and 2023 in all regions of the world.

- Over 70 per cent of the total 905 journalists and agencies surveyed from 129 countries informed that they had been attacked, threatened or pressured

The study found that these attacks came from state machinery such as the police, military forces, government officials, employees and local authorities. "Private actors — extractive industry companies, criminal groups, protesters and local communities — were also responsible for the attacks," it added.

The attacks from state actors spiked significantly from 111 between 2014 and 2018 to 174 attacks between 2019 and 2023.

The nature of attacks included physical, assaults, harassment, arbitrary detentions, including criminal charges pressed against reporters, imprisonment, defamation among other legal attacks.

Journalists attacked were mainly reporting topics on environmental protests, mining, land conflict, deforestation, extreme weather events, pollution, the fossil fuel industry and environmental damage.

Those covering environmental protests, mining and land conflicts faced the highest number of attacks. Those killed in Asia and the Pacific were precisely covering mining, deforestation and land conflicts.

The judicial status of the killings was also found to be in dire shape as the review shows that 19 cases remain unresolved and only five led to convictions so far, while the other five are under investigation.

The survey was conducted jointly by UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists. They found that reporting on environment was becoming increasingly dangerous, making it challenging for journalists to do their job.

Regarding conflicts of interest in newsrooms, "A 299 (33 per cent) of all the respondents indicated they have been internally censored by their editors due to conflict of interests while reporting on environmental issues while 407 respondents (45 per cent) said they have practiced self-censorship," the report noted.

The UN report observes that the global environmental crises of climate change, biodiveristy loss, pollution and other factors impact billions globally and environmental journalism plays a crucial role in "how the world understands this".

The report stressed, "In the face of the global environmental crisis, the importance of environmental reporting cannot be overstated, and thus advocacy groups, journalism networks, donors, multilateral organisations, and other stakeholders must emphasise the need for a free press and the safety of journalists."

Providing funding and resources to train and better equip journalists, particularly those underfunded at the local level, is crucial for covering environmental issues safely, the report said.

—Courtesy Downtoearth

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈھ

Study reveals Malaria linked with genetic changes

Malaria infection is linked with genetic changes, according to a new study.

Researchers extracted genetic material from blood samples of more than 1,800 adults from the African countries of Tanzania, Botswana, Ethiopia, and Cameroon, where malaria is known to be endemic, or constantly present.

According to the 2023 World Health Organisation (WHO) Malaria report, published in 'The Lancet Microbe' journal, around 70 per cent of the global burden of the mosquito-borne disease is concentrated in 11 countries, including India and 10 African countries.

The team, including researchers from the University of Pennsylvania, US, analysed the DNA in white blood cells - crucial to immunity and fighting infections - and measured the lengths of telomeres present at the ends of chromosomes, which carry the genes.

Telomeres protect the chromosome ends from sticking to each other or getting frayed. They are known to shorten with age and can also help predict an individual's risk of getting affected by ageing-related diseases and death.

"We highlight the contributions of genetic and environmental factors influencing telomere length in leukocytes (white blood cells), and we have uncovered a potential role of malaria in shortening of telomere length across sub-Saharan Africa," said Sarah Tishkoff of the University of Pennsylvania, a co-senior author on the study published in The American Journal of Human Genetics.

The researchers found shorter telomere lengths in the white blood cells of adults indigenous to regions where malaria is highly endemic, compared to those in adults indigenous to regions with low malaria endemicity.

Telomeres protect the chromosome ends from sticking to each other or getting frayed ***PHOTO: UNSPLASH***

- Malarial infection is known to cause massive destruction of white blood cells. The extent to which malaria was endemic to a region had a greater impact on telomere lengths

Malarial infection is known to cause massive destruction of white blood cells. The authors said that this process, coupled with that making new cells to restore this loss, could be a possible mechanism through which the disease shortens the length of telomeres.

They also found that the extent to which malaria was endemic to a region had a greater impact on telomere lengths, compared to environmental factors previously identified and known to impact telomere lengths.

"This association between malaria and telomere lengths of white blood cells appears larger than any other known exposure or behaviour that has been investigated in large-scale studies," said Tishkoff.

While previous studies have suggested a link between malaria infection and telomere shortening, the researchers said it remained unknown whether repeated infections throughout life could have a lasting effect on the telomere lengths in people living in malaria-endemic regions.

The authors also said that a longitudinal (long-term) study in children and adults indigenous to regions of high and low malaria endemicity would provide more insightful information.

—PTI

Around 70 per cent of the global burden of the mosquito-borne disease is concentrated in 11 countries ***PHOTO: UNSPLASH***

Orphanage run by Kuki-Metei couple offers hope for harmony

ONE YEAR AFTER MANIPUR

Donjalal Haokip and Rebati Devi, a Meitei-Kuki couple running an orphanage in Manipur ***PHOTO: PTI***

A year after ethnic clashes polarised the state and its people, a Kuki-Meitei couple running an orphanage fostering children from both communities are testimony to the harmony that once was and hope that it will be so again one day soon.

Donjalal Haokip and Rebati Devi, who have no biological children of their own, operate the The Ema Foundation home in Keithelmanbi, the sensitive zone between the Imphal Valley and Kangpokpi, the former dominated by Meiteis and the latter by Kukis.

Is it an easy task considering the tense situation in the state?

"No. But love is the only counter for violence and the way to peace," 52-year-old Haokip told PTI from the home located in the foothills of West Imphal and Kangpokpi.

The couple, who have been running the orphanage since 2015, fosters 17 children, including Meitis, Kukis, Nagas and even Nepalis.

They remember vividly the events of 3 May, 2023 when ethnic clashes broke out over a 'Tribal Solidarity March' organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

"When the violence began on 3 May last year, we thought by the grace of god the situation will be ok by morning.

But another day passed and each passing moment felt like a nightmare. I sent an SOS to Assam Rifles. They assured us support and made some deployment outside the orphanage," Haokip, a Kuki, said

The months that followed were tough and the couple was constantly fearful of what lay next for the children and them.

"The first threat was that we are a Meitei-Kuki couple and then we had children from the communities...our family feared that we will be a very easy target. But we decided to stay put and despite difficulties we have managed to survive, " he said.

The couple got married in 2012 and children at the home call them "mummy" and "papa". The kids attend a nearby school run by the Assam Rifles. The eldest among them studies in Class 10 while the youngest is four years old.

"When my mother passed away in 2008, my wife and I were planning to erect a memorial stone...but we thought again that instead of spending money on a stone erection we can start this and hence named it Ema, which means 'mother' in Manipuri. I sold some family land, we used some savings and then constructed this space.

"Later, officials from Assam Rifles approached us to offer free education to the children and they started going to their school," Haokip added.

The hill state has witnessed sporadic, sometime intense, ethnic clashes since 3 May last year between the majority Meitei community and the Kukis, resulting in the loss of more than 200 lives and displacement of over 60,000 people. While Meiteis are concentrated in Imphal city, the Kukis have shifted to the hills.

Rebati Devi, 47, said the children did not go to school for months.

"They had an idea that something is going on but they did not know what exactly...we did not want the children to know the gory details of the conflict...they are innocent. But once they started going to school and interacted with other children, they became aware and have been asking questions since then.

"So far, we have been able to ensure a safe space for these children but the challenge also is to not let them develop animosity towards each other...we tell them that they are brothers and sisters like before and they do not belong to any community," she said.

According to the couple, there are no signs in the state yet that the Kuki and Meiteis can co-exist peacefully like before.

"We are safe so far but it's no longer the same...we cannot go to either of the areas..we cannot move around even for basic chores. Earlier, people from different parts of Manipur used to visit us because they wanted to spend some time with children or celebrate occasions like birthdays or anniversaries but that has completely stopped now.

"So, there are no visitors now and children miss it," Haokip said.

Haokip and Rebati hope better sense will prevail and people will look for peace rather than fight each other.

"We are one. We all are one.... it's high time we look for harmony rather than bay for each other's blood and kill people. The government's role will come later but we hope people take this resolve themselves," Rebati said.

"I want people to recall the previous years that how everybody used to live together with harmony...the state of Manipur needs love and love will lead to peace," she added.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Trump's ex-aide gets emotional at hush-money trial

WASHINGTON, 4 MAY

Former White House aide Hope Hicks became emotional towards the end of her testimony Friday afternoon during former US president Donald Trump's hush-money trial. Hicks served as Trump's campaign spokesperson during 2016 and was a close confidante. Trump pleaded not guilty to 34 counts of falsifying business records to conceal the payment. He has denied all wrongdoing. Ms Hicks served as the Trump campaign's press secretary and held two stints as the White House communications director. She said after taking the stand in the New York courtroom: "I'm really nervous." Hicks also teared up at one point on the stand after a Trump lawyer asked if a White House position had been created so she could come on board.—*BBC News*

Taiwan, US hold trade talks in Taipei

TAIPEI, 4 MAY

Taiwan's government expressed hope that the US will open its market to Taiwanese mangoes and pineapples, among other agricultural products during the trade talks between the US and Taiwan, Central News Agency reported. John Deng, head of the Cabinet's Office of Trade Negotiations, said that the issue of forced labour was also discussed during the talks as the US urged Taiwan to effectively stop such practices in its supply chains. While addressing a press conference, John Deng said that Taiwan's trade representatives during the trade talks with the US "expressed hope for an expedited and transparent approval process" for the country's applications to export pineapples and mangoes. —*ANI*

Taiwan detects 9 Chinese aircraft, 5 naval vessels

TAIPEI, 4 MAY

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) on Saturday said that nine Chinese military aircraft and five naval vessels were detected operating around nation from 6 am (local time) on Friday to 6 am (local time) on Saturday. In response to Chinese action, Taiwan monitored the situation and deployed combat patrol aircraft, naval vessels, and coastal missile systems, according to Taiwan's MND statement. On X, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence stated, "9 People's Liberation Army aircraft and 5 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 am today.#ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and responded accordingly." Taiwan said that it detected 26 Chinese military aircraft and five naval vessels operating around the nation from 6 am on Thursday and 6 am on Friday. —*ANI*

UK: Boris Johnson turned away from polling station

OXFORDSHIRE, 4 MAY

Former UK prime minister Boris Johnson was turned away from a polling station during the United Kingdom's local elections due to his forgetfulness regarding ID, a requirement he himself had introduced while in office, CNN reported. Polling station officials had to refuse Johnson's attempt to vote in South Oxfordshire on Thursday when he arrived without the necessary photo ID, CNN reported, citing PA media. Johnson made a subsequent trip back with the required identification and successfully cast his vote. The mandate for photo ID in voting was established under Johnson's Conservative government through the Elections Act 2022, a move that garnered significant criticism upon its inception.—*ANI*

Sikh activist's killing: 3 held in Canada

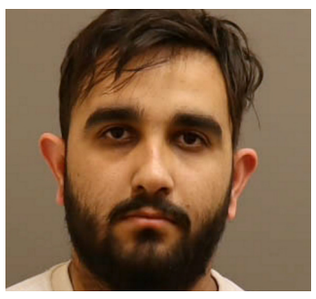
The three are believed to be members of an alleged hit squad tasked by Government of India

OTTAWA/NEW YORK, 4 MAY

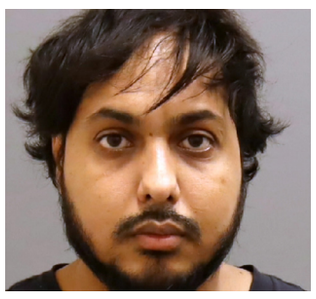
Canadian authorities, who arrested three Indian nationals in connection with the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, have said that their investigation has not concluded and "others" who played a role in the homicide would also be arrested.

Karan Brar, 22, Kamalpreet Singh, 22, and Karanpreet Singh, 28, all Indian nationals residing in Edmonton have been charged with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on Friday said they are investigating if the Indian government was involved in the killing of Nijjar, a Canadian citizen.

The three are believed to be members of an alleged hit squad tasked by the government of India with the killing of Nijjar, 45, outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on 18 June, 2023. "The investigation does not end here. We are aware that there are others out there that played a role in this homicide and we remain dedicated to identifying and arresting each one of them," Superintendent Mandeep Mooker, Officer in Charge of the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) said.



Karan Brar



Karanpreet Singh

Kamalpreet Singh PHOTO: PTI

The three men were arrested for the murder of Nijjar Friday morning by IHIT investigators, with the assistance of members from the British Columbia and Alberta RCMP and the Edmonton Police

The three men were arrested for the murder of Nijjar Friday morning by IHIT investigators, with the assistance of members from the British Columbia and Alberta RCMP and the Edmonton Police Service.

RCMP Assistant Commissioner David Teboul said they are not able to make any comments about the nature of the evidence collected by police nor "can we speak about the motive" behind Nijjar's murder. When asked whether there are any Indian "sleeper agents" in Canada, Teboul said he could not say more because the issue is "very much at the centre of evidence and ongoing investigations", CBC News reported.

Asked whether the public should consider the men to have been "guns for hire," police said more information would come out in court, it said. "However, understanding this situation has attracted considerable and very broad public interest, I will say this matter is still very much under active investigation. I will underscore that today's announcements are not a complete account of the investigative work currently underway.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. India has dismissed Trudeau's charges as "absurd" and "motivated." —*PTI*

India trying to influence Canadian politics: Probe

OTTAWA, 4 MAY

- The findings in the interim report found evidence of foreign interference in Canada's last two federal elections in 2019 and 2021

Indian officials, including Canada-based proxies, engage in a range of activities that seek to influence Canadian communities and politicians to "align" Ottawa's position with New Delhi's interests on key issues, particularly concerns over Khalistani separatists in Canada, an official probe has found.

The findings in the interim report by Commissioner Marie-Josee Hogue, who is leading the independent public inquiry, found evidence of foreign interference in Canada's last two federal elections in 2019 and 2021 but the results of the votes were not affected and the electoral system was robust.

India has previously rejected as "baseless" the allegations of its interference in Canadian elections and asserted that the core issue has been Ottawa's meddling in New Delhi's internal affairs. The report, published on Friday said the People's Republic of China ("PRC") stands out as the main perpetrator of foreign interference against Canada.

"China has been assessed by Canadian authorities as the most active foreign state actor engaged in interference directed at government officials, political organisations, candidates for political office and diaspora communities," it said.

"India does not differentiate between lawful, pro-Khalistani political advocacy and the relatively small Canada-based Khalistani violent extremism. It views anyone aligned with Khalistani separatism as a seditious threat to India," the report said. —*PTI*

Russian troops have been advancing in the PHOTO: X/@BEIINGAHMAD

Heavy shelling batter Ukrainian village

KYIV, 4 MAY

The Ukrainian village of Ocheretyne has been battered by fighting, drone footage obtained by Associated Press shows. The village has been a target for Russian forces in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

Russian troops have been advancing in the area, pounding Kyiv's depleted, ammunition-deprived forces with artillery, drones and bombs. Ukraine's military has acknowledged the Russians have gained a "foothold" in Ocheretyne, which had a population of about 3,000 before the war, but says that fighting continues.

Residents have scrambled to flee the village, among them a 98-year-old womanwho walked almost 10 km alone last week, wearing a pair of slippers and supported by a cane, until she reached Ukrainian front lines. Not a single person is seen in the footage, and no building in Ocheretyne appears to have been left untouched by the fighting. Most houses, apartment blocks and other buildings look damaged beyond repair, and many houses have been pummelled into piles of wood and bricks. A factory on the outskirts has also been badly damaged.

The footage also shows smoke billowing from several houses, and fires burning in at least two buildings. Elsewhere, Russia has in recent weeks stepped up attacks on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, in an attempt to pummel the region's energy infrastructure and terrorise its 1.3 million residents.

Four people were wounded and a two-story civilian building was damaged and set ablaze overnight after Russian forces struck Kharkiv, in northeastern Ukraine, with exploding drones, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said Saturday.

Ukraine's military said Russia launched a total of 13 Shahed drones at the Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions of eastern Ukraine overnight, all of which were shot down by Ukrainian air defences. Syniehubov said Russia also bombed Kharkiv on Friday, damaging residential buildings and sparking a fire. An 82-year-old woman died and two men were wounded. —*AP*

Experts express concern over 'free media' in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 4 MAY

While observing World Press Freedom Day, media bodies voiced concerns over the state of free media in Pakistan, with a focus particularly on mainstream media and social media restrictions during election days, Pakistan-based Dawn reported.

The Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND) has committed to continue the constitutional and legal struggle for freedom of expression in Pakistan and face unfavourable circumstances head-on.

In a statement, AEMEND said that journalists and media outlets in Pakistan face severe challenges, as state and non-state actors have been placing restrictions on television programmes, shutting down broadcasts, pressing for the termination of journalists, creating unnecessary pressures, and making illegal demands.

AEMEND said, "Such tactics are increasing by the day," adding, "Character assassination of journalists, especially women journalists, is part of this campaign, and political party workers are also part of such malicious campaigns," according to Dawn report.

—*ANI*

GAZA WAR PROTESTS

Universities brace for disruption at graduations

WASHINGTON, 4 MAY

The next chapter of campus protests may soon begin, with universities across the US preparing for possible disruptions at graduation ceremonies.

Four universities rocked by pro-Palestinian protests will hold graduations this weekend. Many others, including Columbia University, have scheduled ceremonies throughout the month and in June. Universities are working to enhance security while protesters contemplate walkouts and other possible actions.

Protesters set up camps and staged campus demonstrations to call on their universities to cut ties with Israel over the war in Gaza. Many colleges responded by calling police, leading to thousands of arrests. There have been demonstrations at nearly 140 institutions across 45 states and Washington DC since the protests started at Columbia University last month, according to a BBC tally. Student protesters have so far, for the most part, been quiet about plans for disruptions at graduations, which are known as commencements in the US.

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FOR GAZA NO CLASS NO WORK NO BUSINESS AS USUAL
THOUSANDS OF PALESTINIAN PRISONERS ILLEGALLY DETAINED BY "IS" AEL

Protesters set up camps for demonstrations PHOTO: X/@ALBANIAN_NEWS

At Indiana University, however, IU Divest and the Palestine Solidarity Committee - whose camp at Indiana University was cleared by police twice in recent weeks - have called for a walk-out at graduation events.

"Make your pro-Palestine stance clear at the 'Liberated Zone' instead," reads a post on Instagram, referencing a protest area at the university's campus in Bloomington. "Join us in wearing your keffiyeh along with your cap and gown."

Faculty members have also discussed holding "a silent protest" outside the commencement to make their displeasure known without interfering with the event, according to two sources who asked to remain anonymous.

The University of Michigan, Ohio State University and the University of Connecticut - all of which have experienced demonstrations over the last two weeks - have graduations on 4 and 5 May. —*BBC News*

Landslides, floods in Indonesia kill 15 people

Some 115 people were evacuated PHOTO: PTI

SULAWESI, 4 MAY

Landslides and flooding triggered by heavy rains in Indonesia's South Sulawesi province have killed at least 15 people after dozens of homes were swept away and roads damaged, the country's disaster management agency said.

Indonesia is prone to landslides during the rainy season, which began in January, with the problem aggravated in some areas by deforestation, and prolonged downpours caused floods in parts of the country that comprises 17,000 islands. The landslides struck Luwu regency in South Sulawesi, said Abdul Muhari, spokesperson of Indonesia's disaster mitigation agency (BNPB). "A total of 14 residents died due to floods and landslides in Luwu regency," he said. In another area of South Sulawesi, at least one person died and two others were injured, Abdul said.

According to BNPB, at least 100 houses were seriously damaged and 42 were swept away. Some 115 people were evacuated to mosques or relatives' homes —*Al Jazeera*

'Ready to hold talks but not for striking deal'

ISLAMABAD, 4 MAY

Imran Khan PHOTO: PTI

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has said that he is ready to hold talks but not to strike a "deal" with anyone who has stolen his party's mandate in the 8 February general election.

Talking to journalists at the high-security Adiala jail in Rawalpindi on Friday, the 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf founder asserted that negotiations were held only with adversaries and therefore the talks should be held with those who were the biggest opponents of PTI at present, apparently a reference to the military establishment, the Dawn newspaper reported on Saturday. Underlining that he had been saying for 18 months that he was ready to hold negotiations but not to strike a deal, Khan reiterated that his party would hold talks with everyone but the three parties, the Geo News reported. "Someone who wants to leave the country or avoid imprisonment makes a deal," he said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Nawaz Sharif. Khan named Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub and Leader of the Opposition in Senate Shibli Faraz for holding negotiations.

"I have proposed these three names for talks and not for a deal," he said. The general elections delivered a fractured mandate. Independent candidates, a majority of them backed by Khan's PTI, won 93 seats in the 336-member National Assembly. Former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif's PML-N won 75 seats while Bilawal Zardari Bhutto-led Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) came third with 54 seats. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) won 17 seats.

PML-N struck a post-poll deal with Bhutto's PPP and four smaller parties and formed the government in March. —*PTI*

FIGHTING INTENSIFIES

Starvation stalking Sudan's Darfur: UN

UNITED NATIONS, 4 MAY

The United Nations food agency warned Sudan's warring parties Friday that there is a serious risk of widespread starvation and death in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan if they don't allow humanitarian aid into the vast western region.

Leni Kinzli, the World Food Program's regional spokesperson, said at least 1.7 million people in Darfur were experiencing emergency levels of hunger in December, and the number "is expected to be much higher today."

"Our calls for humanitarian access to conflict hotspots in Sudan have never been more critical," she told a virtual UN press conference from Nairobi. Sudan plunged into chaos in mid-April 2023, when long-simmering tensions between its military led by Gen Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces commanded by Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, broke out into street battles in the capital, Khartoum. Fighting has spread to other parts of the country, especially urban areas and the Darfur region.

1.7 million people were experiencing emergency levels of hunger PHOTO: X/@WFPSUDAN

The paramilitary forces, known as the RSF, have gained control of most of Darfur and are besieging El Fasher, the only capital in Darfur they don't hold, where some 500,000 civilians had taken refuge. Kinzli said WFP's partners on the ground report that the situation in El Fasher is "extremely dire" and it's difficult for civilians wanting to flee the reported RSF bombings and shelling to leave.

She said the violence in El Fasher and surrounding North Darfur is exacerbating the critical humanitarian needs in the entire Darfur region, where crop production for staple cereals like wheat, sorghum and millet is 78% less than the five-year average.

Kinzli said she received photos earlier Friday from colleagues on the ground of severely malnourished children in a camp for displaced people in Central Darfur, as well as older people "who have nothing left but skin and bones." "Recent reports from our partners indicate that 20 children have died in recent weeks of malnutrition in that IDP camp," she said. —*AP*

Volkswagen inaugurates new store in TN

CHENNAI, 4 MAY

German automaker Volkswagen has inaugurated a new store in the city under its expansion drive in the state, strengthening its retail presence in the country. With the setting up of a new outlet at Ambattur in the city, the total network for the automobile major stands at 26 sales and 20 service facilities in Tamil Nadu. "The Chennai Metropolitan area is one of the key markets for Volkswagen in India. In 2023, our Virtus was one of the highest-selling sedans in this market. With this inauguration of our newest touchpoint in Chennai, we are emphasising our commitment to the rising need for premium, safe, and reliable vehicles throughout India..", Volkswagen Passenger Cars India Brand Director Ashish Gupta said in a company statement on Saturday. *—PTI*

Air India reduces cabin baggage allowance to 15 kg

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Loss-making Air India has reduced the free cabin baggage allowance to 15 kilogram from 20 kilogram for the lowest economy fare segment on domestic flights. The changes have been made in the menu-based pricing model fare families that were introduced by the Tata Group-owned Air India last August, with the airline saying that a one-size-fits-all approach is no longer ideal. There are three fare families -- Comfort, Comfort Plus and Flex -- that offer different levels of benefits and fare restrictions at various price points, an airline spokesperson said on Saturday. With effect from 2 May, the free cabin baggage allowance for the 'Comfort' and 'Comfort Plus' categories has been reduced to 15 kg from 20 kg and 25 kg, respectively. Prior to the introduction of the fare families concept, passengers were allowed to carry 25 kilograms of cabin baggage free of any additional charge. *—PTI*

Kotak Bank posts 18% rise in Q4 profit at ₹4,133cr

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday reported an 18 per cent growth in standalone net profit at Rs 4,133 crore for the quarter ended 31 March, 2024. In the fourth quarter of the 2022–23 fiscal, Kotak Bank posted a profit of Rs 3,496 crore. Total income rose to Rs 15,285 crore in the March quarter of the financial year 2023–24 from Rs 12,007 crore in the year-ago period. For the 2023-24 fiscal, net profit rose 26 per cent to Rs 13,782 crore, from Rs 10,939 crore in the 2022–23 fiscal. Total income increased to Rs 56,072 crore in 2023–24 from Rs 41,334 crore in 2022–23. Net Interest Income (NII) for fiscal 2023–24 increased to Rs 25,993 crore, from Rs 21,552 crore in 2022–23, registering a 21 per cent on-year increase. NII in March, 2024 increased to Rs 6,909 crore, from Rs 6,103 crore in the year-ago period, up 13 per cent. PTI—*PTI*

IDBI Bank Q4 net profit surges 44% to ₹1,628 crore

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Private sector lender IDBI Bank on Saturday reported a 44 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 1,628 crore in the March quarter of financial year 2023-24. In comparison, the bank had posted a net profit of Rs 1,133 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to Rs 7,887 crore in the period under review, from Rs 7,014 crore in the January-March period of fiscal year 2022-23. For the 2023-24 fiscal, net profit grew 55 per cent to an all-time high of Rs 5,634 crore. In 2022-23, the profit was at Rs 3,645 crore. Total income for fiscal year 2023-24 was at Rs 30,037 crore, up from Rs 24,942 crore in financial year 2022-23. Net Interest Income improved by 12 per cent in the March quarter to Rs 3,688 crore, as against Rs 3,280 crore in the fourth quarter of 2022-23. *—PTI*

Government lifts ban on onion exports

Govt imposed min export price of USD 550/tonne

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The government on Saturday lifted the ban on onion exports but imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of USD 550 per tonne, amid ongoing Lok Sabha elections in the country. Last night, the government imposed a 40 per cent duty on export of onions.

In August last year, India had imposed a 40 per cent export duty on onions up to 31 December, 2023. "The export policy of onions is amended from prohibited to free subject to MEP of USD 550 per metric ton with immediate effect and until further orders," the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification. On 8 December, 2023, the government banned export of onions from March 31 this year. In March, the export prohibition was extended till further orders. As per official data, onion production in 2023-24 (First Advance Estimates) is expected to be around 254.73 lakh tonnes compared to around 302.08 lakh tonnes last year. This is due to a decrease of 34.31 lakh tonnes output in Maharashtra, 9.95 lakh tonnes in Karnataka, 3.54 lakh tonnes in Andhra Pradesh and 3.12 lakh tonnes in Rajasthan, the data showed.

Last month, in an official statement, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said the government has allowed export of 99,150 tonnes of onion to six neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka.

In August last year, India had imposed a 40 per cent export duty on onions up to 31 December, 2023 *PHOTO: PTI*

- Last month the government has allowed export of 99,150 tonnes of onion to six neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka

The Congress last month accused the Narendra Modi government of "callously neglecting" Maharashtra's onion farmers reeling due to the ban on onion exports and said that its manifesto promises a predictable import-export policy to prevent such catastrophic last-minute policies being imposed on farmers.

Onion prices at the Lasalgaon market in Maharashtra's Nashik district went up by average Rs 200 per quintal after the Union Government on Saturday lifted the ban on exports. The Agriculture Produce Market Committee at Lasalgaon is said to be the biggest wholesale onion market in India. *—ANI*

7TH FOREIGN OFFICE CONSULTATIONS

India and Sweden stress on need to focus on tech

STOCKHOLM, 4 MAY

India and Sweden held the 7th session of Foreign Office Consultations in Stockholm on Friday and welcomed the progress in all areas of bilateral cooperation and deliberated on the way forward in priority sectors of innovation and sustainability, trade and investment. During the talks, India and Sweden stressed on the need to focus on new emerging technologies like semiconductors, green steel and green batteries. The two nations discussed security aspects, including cyber security and counter terrorism and agreed to consider having joint collaborations in the defence sector, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release. In a press release, MEA stated, "Both sides welcomed the progress in all areas of bilateral cooperation and deliberated on the way forward in priority sectors of Innovation & sustainability, trade & investment and stressed on the need to focus on new emerging technologies like semiconductors, green steel and green batteries." "The contribution of LeadIT under India Sweden Industry Transition Partnership in combating climate change found a special mention. The two sides also discussed security aspects including cyber security and counter terrorism and also agreed to consider having joint collaborations in the defence sector," it added. For the meeting, the Indian side was led by Secretary (West) in the MEA, Pavan Kapoor and the Swedish side was led by Jan Knutsson, State Secretary, Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the meeting, the officials appreciated the robust and fast growing economic ties and noted the importance of holding the India Sweden Innovation bridge, India Sweden Innovation day and India Sweden Sustainability day and termed it an "important step" towards enhancing business to business relations.

The two sides appreciated the presence of a large Indian community in the Sweden, which forms an important link which they stressed forms an important link between two nations. India and Sweden expressed satisfaction over the growing cooperation to further strengthen India-EU bilateral cooperation. The two sides agreed to hold the next round of consultations at a mutually convenient date in New Delhi. *—PTI*

India and Sweden held the 7th session of Foreign Office Consultations in Stockholm on Friday *PHOTO: ANI*

Allot land for plantation: Paper industry to govt

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The paper industry has faced shortage of wood, the key raw material, and it is the biggest concern for mills in India, the Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) said in a statement on Saturday

The Indian paper industry has urged the government to provide degraded land on a long-term lease to paper mills for pulpwood plantation to address raw material shortage and boost rural employment.

The industry has highlighted that a large chunk of degraded land is available in the country, and even if a small fraction of that is allotted on lease to paper mills for pulpwood plantation, it can be a game changer for industry growth and greening of India.

The paper industry has faced shortage of wood, the key raw material, and it is the biggest concern for mills in India, the Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) said in a statement on Saturday.

While the paper industry is continuing with agro forestry efforts, pulpwood plantations need to be enhanced rapidly to meet the requirements of domestic industry, the IPMA stated.

PHOTO: PTI

"Even if a fraction of the degraded land available in the country is provided on lease to the industry for pulpwood plantation, the same can be a game changer for growth of domestic manufacturing, rural empowerment and greening of India," it said.

If domestic agro forestry is not encouraged, import of wastepaper and wood pulp will have to be further increased causing heavy strain on the industry and economy, Agarwal added.

The IPMA also said that for procurement of wood, the industry has worked incessantly with over 5 lakh marginal farmers over the last several years and has successfully brought over 12 lakh hectares of largely degraded land under plantations through agro forestry. *—PTI*

IN MARCH

India, China add 60% of global central bank gold purchase

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The Reserve Bank of India added 5 tons of Gold to its reserves during March. The gold reserves of the central banks worldwide reported a net increase in their gold reserves.

According to data from the World Gold Council, the total net buying of gold amounted to 16 tons during the month. The demand for gold remained robust, with monthly gross purchases staying steady at 40 tons. However, this was partly offset by gross sales of 25 tons.

In India RBI's gold holdings rose to a record high of 822.1 tons by the start of April representing an 18.5 tons net acquisition since the beginning of the year. The central bank's net gold buying in 2024 has already surpassed its net purchases in 2023 (16.2t). As of early April, gold's share of total reserves has risen to 8.4% from 7.7% at the end of 2023.

Central banks worldwide took the lead in transactions involving gold during March, with several emerging markets actively participating in buying.

The Central Bank of Turkey emerged as the largest buyer, adding a substantial 14 tons of gold to its reserves. Following closely behind was the Reserve Bank of India, which increased its gold holdings by 5 tons. Similarly, the People's Bank of China also added 5 tons of gold to its reserves.

Other notable buyers included Kazakhstan and Singapore, each adding 4 tons of gold to their holdings. Russia also contributed to the buying spree by increasing its gold reserves by 3 tons.

The significant increase in gold purchases by central banks reflects continued confidence in the precious metal as a store of value and a hedge against economic uncertainties. Gold has long been considered a safe haven asset, particularly during times of market volatility and inflationary pressures. *—ANI*

The increase reflects continued confidence in the precious metal as a store of value *PHOTO: PTI*

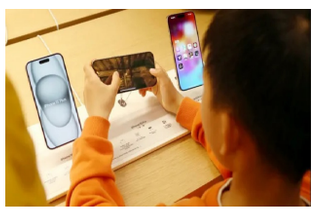

PHOTO: PTI

APPLE SALES FALL IN MARKETS ACROSS THE GLOBE

CALIFORNIA, 4 MAY

Apple sales have fallen in almost every market across the globe, according to the latest results from the tech giant.

The company said that demand for its smartphones dropped by more than 10 per cent in the first three months of this year, while overall sales fell in every geographic region except for Europe.

Apple said that overall, revenues across the company declined by 4 per cent to $90.8 billion which was the biggest drop for more than a year.

Nevertheless, the results were not as bad as expected and Apple's share price rose in after-hours trading in New York.

The company said the figures were distorted by COVID-related supply disruptions, which led to unusually strong sales during the same period last year.

It said it expected sales to return to growth in the months ahead, noting upcoming product launches and investments in artificial intelligence (AI).

Overall sales in the critical greater China market dropped by 8 per cent. Cook attempted to reassure investors about the state of the business in the world's second largest economy, noting that iPhone sales were actually up in "mainland" China.

Competition in that market has been intensifying from local rivals such Huawei.

Gil Luria, senior software analyst at DA Davidson, said companies such as Huawei do well in China because "it is the homegrown brand".

Struggles at the company - which has endured a streak of sales declines for five of the last six quarters - marked a contrast with the wider market.

Globally, smartphone shipments rose 10 per cent in the first three months of the year, expanding after a long lacklustre period, according to research firm Canalys.

Luria said that for Apple, there hasn't been "significant improvements to the handset" since the iPhone 12 was launched almost four years ago "when Apple introduced 5G connectivity which compelled a lot of consumers to upgrade the phone". BBC News Finance chief Luca Maestri said Apple sales were expected to rise in the "low single digits" in the three months to June. He added that the firm expected double digit growth in its services business.Looking ahead, Angelo Zino, senior equity analyst at CFRA Research, said: "China is holding up better than expected and there are a host of upcoming events/catalysts on the horizon that could improve investor sentiment." *—BBC News*

Tata ties up with SJVN for 460 MW work

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd (TPREL) on Saturday said it has signed an agreement with state-owned SJVN Ltd to set up a 460 MW Firm and Dispatchable Renewable Energy (FDRE) project.

An FDRE plant enables round-the-clock power supply, assisting power distribution companies (discoms) in fulfilling their Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs) and Energy Storage Obligations (ESOs).

PHOTO: PTI

"The plant, designed to meet the 460 MW FDRE requirement, integrates solar, wind, and battery storage technologies to ensure efficient energy dispatch during peak hours, thereby stabilizing the grid," it said.

The plant is expected to generate nearly 3,000 million units (MUs) of power and offset 2,200 million kgs of CO_2 emissions annually, TPREL said in a statement.

With this addition, the total renewables capacity of TPREL has reached 9,421 MW (PPA capacity is 7,978 MW) including 4,906 MW projects under various stages of implementation. *—PTI*

Chances of Skydance, Sony takeover of Paramount grim

NEW YORK, 4 MAY

The sale of Paramount Global to Skydance Media or Sony appears to be growing more unlikely, according to multiple outlets, as it looks to continue to narrow its streaming losses and navigate the departure of its former CEO.

Paramount's special board committee in charge of considering mergers and acquisitions has backed off from an offer made by Skydance Media—founded by billionaire Larry Ellison's son David—to acquire Shari Redstone's controlling stake in Paramount and merge the two companies, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Paramount's will still review a USD26 billion all-cash buyout from Sony and Apollo Global Management reportedly made Thursday, according to Variety, noting insiders expect the deal may fall through because of anticipated regulatory hurdles. *Courtesy, Forbes*

IN 92 COUNTRIES

IBM expands globally to India in AWS marketplace

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

IBM has announced an expansion in the availability of its software portfolio, making it accessible in 92 countries through the AWS (Amazon Web Services) Marketplace.

This expansion, which includes India, aims to simplify procurement processes for clients, streamline purchasing, and create new efficiencies while leveraging their AWS committed spend for IBM software purchases.

AWS Marketplace is an online store that allows customers to find, test, buy, and use software and services that run on Amazon Web Services (AWS).

The move by IBM comes as cloud marketplaces continue to emerge as the fastest-growing route to market for Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) software.

AWS Marketplace is an online store that allows customers to find, test, buy, and use software *PHOTO: PTI*

According to a Canalys study, the market is expected to reach US USD 45 billion by 2025, showing an 84 per cent compound annual growth rate over five years.

Cloud marketplaces like AWS Marketplace facilitate shorter buying cycles, consolidated billing, and rapid scalability of software deployments.

"Both IBM and AWS play a huge role in our success," said Uri Bechar, Vice President of software engineering at Redis.

He further added that "Buying IBM software in AWS Marketplace gives us more flexibility, enables us to use our committed spend, and ultimately makes the entire process easier so we can deploy faster and start seeing value from our investments."

- This expansion, which includes India, aims to simplify procurement processes for clients, streamline purchasing, and create new efficiencies while leveraging their AWS committed spend for IBM software purchases

IBM's software offerings in AWS Marketplace include a portfolio of 44 listings and 29 SaaS offerings, providing clients with access to artificial intelligence (AI) and data technologies. Among these offerings are components of the watsonx AI and Data platform, including watsonx.data, a fit-for-purpose data store, and watsonx.ai, a next-generation enterprise studio for AI builders. Two of IBM's AI Assistants -- watsonx Assistant and watsonx Orchestrate -- are also available, with watsonx.governance expected to be added soon.

IBM's offerings in AWS Marketplace extend beyond AI and data technologies to include flagship database Db2 Cloud Pak for Data, a portfolio of automation software, and IBM Security and Sustainability software portfolios. These solutions are built on Red Hat OpenShift Service on AWS, allowing clients to deploy on AWS with flexible licensing options.

Moreover, IBM is launching 15 new IBM Consulting professional services and assets on AWS Marketplace, exclusively designed for AWS. *—ANI*

Punjab Kings floor CSK by 7 wickets

The pitch to play a key role in today's match

CHENNAI, 4 MAY

Punjab Kings mounted a pragmatic chase to consign Chennai Super Kings to a demoralising seven-wicket defeat at their own den in their IPL match here on Wednesday.

Punjab rode on quick 40s by Jonny Bairstow (46, 30b, 7x4, 1x6) and Rilee Rossouw (43, 23b, 5x4, 2x6) to move past Chennai's modest 162 for seven, which was built around skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's solid 62 (48b, 5x4, 2x6).

The win took PBKS to seventh place on the points table with eight points, while CSK stayed on fourth with 10 points. Super Kings' defence of 163 faced multiple barricades as their spinners – Moeen Ali and Ravindra Jadeja – were rendered ineffective because of dew and pacer Deepak Chahar walked off the field with a niggle after bowling just two balls.

Gaikwad and Ajinkya Rahane (29, 24b) added 61 runs for the opening wicket but they consumed 49 balls.

There were flashes of intent too. Gaikwad played a fine upper cut off pacer Arshdeep Singh for a boundary and Rahane creamed three fours in a row off Curran, including a lovely cover drive.

The slide of CSK began once PBKS brought their spinners on immediately after the Power Play that yielded a satisfactory 55 runs. *—PTI*

Punjab Kings mounted a pragmatic chase to consign Chennai Super Kings to a demoralising seven-wicket defeat **PHOTO: PTI**

TODAY'S MATCH

Time: 3:30 PM

Where To Watch:

Jio Cinema, Star Sports Network

Stadium: MA Chidamabaram Stadium, Chennai

LSG wary of KKR's all-round firepower

KKR's Starc performance under scanner

LUCKNOW, 4 MAY

Lucknow Super Giants will have to bring their 'A' game forward to prevail against a dominant Kolkata Knight Riders when the two teams, marching towards IPL playoffs, clash here on Sunday.

With an all-round win by 24 runs over Mumbai Indians propelling the second-placed KKR to 14 points — one more step closer to qualification — the pressure will be on KL Rahul's LSG to find a way past the threat that Shreyas Iyer's side poses.

Lucknow Super Giants are placed just one rung below KKR at number three with 12 points from 10 matches with six wins and four defeats.

With a rampant Sunrisers Hyderabad (12 points) hot on heir heels at fourth, followed by the dangerous Chennai Super Kings (10 points) and Delhi Capitals (10 points) on the points table, LSG will be under pressure to avoid getting into a mid-table battle as the race for the final-four has intensified.

However, having trumped MI on a sluggish wicket which exposed their batting frailties, KKR will aim for a much improved performance with the bat.

For the second time in this IPL, KKR batters struggled when the ball did not come on to the bat and they were forced to change gears in order to build a strong target. *—PTI*

Lucknow Super Giants will have to bring their 'A' game forward to prevail against a dominant Kolkata Knight Riders **PHOTO: PTI**

TODAY'S MATCH

Time: 7:30 PM

Where To Watch:

Jio Cinema, Star Sports Network

Stadium: Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow

Rublev beats Fritz to reach Madrid final

MADRID, 4 MAY

Andrey Rublev beat Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-3 on Friday to reach the Madrid Open final where he will meet Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Auger-Aliassime advanced after Jiri Lehecka had to retire at 3-3 in the first set of their semifinal and joined the list of players injured at the event. The men's final for the clay-court event is on Sunday.

The eighth-ranked Rublev entered Madrid on a four-game losing streak after early exits in Indian Wells, Miami, Monte Carlo and Barcelona. He has won four straight in Spain's capital, including against two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz in the quarterfinals. "It's crazy," Rublev said. "It's the good thing about sports, about tennis. One week can change everything, you have to remember that ... because you can't perform always at 100%, so it is normal there will be ups and downs."

Rublev is seeking his 16th career title and his second of the season after winning Hong Kong in January. He has a 5-1 record against Auger-Aliassime, including a win in their sole matchup on clay. Lehecka wept — and smashed his racket on the ground — when he called it quits due to an apparent back injury. Auger-Aliassime hugged him at the net to show his support for the 31st-ranked Czech, who knocked out Rafael Nadal on Wednesday.

This was the third time at the tournament that Auger-Aliassime moved on after his opponent had physical problems. His second-round opponent, Jakub Mensik, retired in their second set, and in the quarterfinals top-seeded Jannik Sinner said he couldn't play due to a hip injury and gave Auger-Aliassime a walkover. *—AP*

Andrey Rublev **PHOTO: AFP**

SINNER, ALCARAZ WITHDRAW FROM ITALIAN OPEN

ROME, 4 MAY

Second-ranked Jannik Sinner announced Saturday that he is withdrawing from the Italian Open because of an injured hip — denying the tournament of its most anticipated home player in decades. Sinner, 22, raised the Australian Open trophy in January to become the first Italian man to win a Grand Slam singles title in nearly a half-century — since Adriano Panatta at the 1976 French Open. Third-ranked Carlos Alcaraz announced his withdrawal from the Italian Open on Friday because of the right forearm injury that already prompted him to pull out of tournaments in Monte Carlo and Barcelona.

The announcement comes two days after Alcaraz's bid to win a third straight Madrid Open title ended with a three-set loss to Andrey Rublev in the quarterfinals. *—AP*

Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner **PHOTO: AFP**

Mumbai City FC players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 final match over Mohun Bagan Super Giants, at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Mumbai City FC MB, lifts ISL title

KOLKATA, 4 MAY

Continued from 1...

Their moment of reckoning came in the 81st minute as Bipin came off the bench to score the decisive second goal to help Mumbai snatch the lead. It was Bipin's 90th minute strike that had helped Mumbai City FC win their maiden title in 2020-21 when they overturned an identical 1-0 lead to down Mohun Bagan 2-1.

Nine minutes were added to the second-half, and Mohun Bagan had enough time to bring on the equaliser but their forwards lacked the sting and the Islanders nailed the final nail in the coffin with a 90+7th minute strike by substitute Jakub Vojtus.

The match also crushed Mohun Bagan's dream of becoming the first team to defend the ISL Cup and complete a rare double of winning the League Winners Shield and the title. Sergio Lobera-coached Mumbai City FC had achieved the rare feat in their memorable 2020-21 season. But it was not a day for Mohun Bagan's shrewd 66-year-old Spaniard tactician Antonio Lopez Habas who appeared in a record fourth ISL final. Three weeks after the Islanders failed to defend the Shield going down to the same team 1-2 at the same venue, the Petr Kratky-coached side dished out a much-improved show right from the start. They controlled the possession and initiated a flurry of attacks with Lallianzuala Chhangte in the thick of things, and also hit the post twice in the first half-an-hour's play. *—PTI*

Rohit to lead Junior hockey

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Defender Rohit has been named captain of the Indian junior men's hockey team, with Shardanand Tiwari as his deputy in a 20-member squad which will tour Europe from May 20-29. India will play five matches across three nations -- Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands -- during the tour, as part of Hockey India's initiative to help the team gain exposure and experience. "We have been training hard and have developed an understanding," said captain Rohit. *—PTI*

Haryana, MP win in Nat'l Women's Hockey League

RANCHI, 4 MAY

Haryana and Madhya Pradesh beat Bengal and Maharashtra respectively at the National Women's Hockey League 2024 (Phase 1) here on Saturday. While Haryana defeated Bengal 4-3 in a thriller to register their third consecutive win, Madhya Pradesh got the better of Maharashtra 2-1 in another match. In the opening match of the day, Bengal was off the blocks and running in no time with Silbiya Nag (2nd minute) converting a penalty corner early in the game. Selestina Horo (19th) then doubled their lead with a penalty corner conversion in the second quarter. Haryana captain Neelam (20th) quickly retaliated with a penalty corner conversion to reduce the deficit as Bengal led 2-1 at halftime. Nandni (41st) converted another penalty corner for Haryana to level the scores before Shashi Khasa (43rd) converted yet another penalty corner to help Haryana take the lead. Pinki (46th) scored a field goal early in the final quarter to take Haryana to a 4-2 lead. *—PTI*

ASIAN U-22 & YOUTH BOXING

INDIA PUGILISTS CONFIRM RECORD 43 MEDALS

ASTANA, 4 MAY

Akash Gorkha, Vishvanath Suresh, Nikhil and Preet Malik advanced to the U-22 men's finals as Indian boxers confirmed an unprecedented 43 medals across categories at the ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing Championships here on Saturday.

Senior national champion Akash extended his dominating run in the 60kg category with a 5-0 win over Ilyasov Sayat of Uzbekistan in the semi-finals. Reigning youth world champion Vishvanath (48kg) won 5-2 against Baricuatro Bryan of Philippines after the bout was reviewed.

The other two semi-finalists, Nikhil (57kg) and Preet (67kg) also won their bouts with a similar 5-2 scoreline after a review against Mongolia's Dorjnyambuu Ganbold and Almaz Orozbekov of Kyrgyzstan respectively. Meanwhile, it was a heartbreak for M Jadumani Singh (51kg), Ajay Kumar (63.5kg), Ankush (71kg), Dhruv Singh (80kg), Jugnoo (86kg) and Yuvraj (92kg) as they ended their campaigns with bronze medals following their losses in the U-22 semis.

Nine women boxers, including Olympic-bound Preeti (54kg), will be in action in the U-22 semi-finals. The U-22 finals will be played on Tuesday.

In the youth women's semi-finals played on Friday night, reigning junior world champion Nisha (52kg) and Asian youth champion Nikita Chand (60kg) along with five other boxers entered the finals.

Lakshay Rathi (92+kg), Annu (48kg), Yatri Patel (57kg), Parthavi Grewal (66kg), Akansha Phalaswal (70kg) and Nirjhara Bana (+81kg) were defeated and ended their campaigns with bronze medals in the youth category. Overall, Indian boxers have secured 43 medals in the prestigious tournament, which has been witnessing high-voltage action with the presence of 390-plus boxers from more than 24 countries, including strong boxing nations such as China, India, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan fighting for the medals across 25 weight categories. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AFP

15-year ban on ex-Olympic power broker Ahmad

GENEVA, 4 MAY

International Olympic Committee has suspended former Olympic power broker Sheikh Ahmad of Kuwait for 15 years after his conviction for forgery was upheld on appeal this year at a Swiss criminal appeals court. Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah's sanction for "a betrayal of his IOC Member's oath, as well as the seriousness of the damage to the IOC's reputation" was approved by the Olympic body's executive board in a decision seen by The Associated Press. The 15-year suspension starts from the date of his previous ban for a separate issue of unethical conduct, in an Olympic Council of Asia election. That was a three-year sanction imposed on 27 July last year. *—PTI*

Forward Kirby to leave Chelsea women

CHELSEA, 4 MAY

England forward Fran Kirby will leave Chelsea at the end of the season when her contract expires after a trophy-laden nine years with the reigning Women's Super League champions. Kirby, 30, is the club's leading goals scorer in the modern era, with 115 goals in 205 appearances. She has helped Chelsea win 15 trophies since joining from Reading in 2015, including six Women's Super League titles, five FA Cups and two League Cups. "To leave with the trophies that I have won, with the team-mates I've played with - some of the world's best players - it has been one of the biggest privileges of my life," Kirby said in an emotional video message to supporters. Kirby joined Emma Hayes' Chelsea after playing an integral role for England in their third-place finish at the 2015 World Cup in Canada. *—BBC News*

PHOTO: AFP

Rajput appointed as advisor for T20 Mumbai League

MUMBAI, 4 MAY

Mumbai Cricket Association announced former India cricketer Lalchand Rajput as the advisor for T20 Mumbai League, which is scheduled to start tentatively on 27 May, on Saturday. The first edition of the T20 Mumbai League was held in 2018 and the second in 2019 but the tournament was shelved thereon. Both the editions featured eight teams each. Along with the appointment of Rajput in a bid to revive the tournament, the MCA also appointed the former India and Mumbai pacer Raju Kulkarni as the chairman of its Cricket Improvement Committee. *—PTI*

Korea's Kim, Japan's Semikawa get into title mix

MCKINNEY, 4 MAY

Korea's SH Kim boosted his quest for a maiden PGA Tour victory as he surged into joint ninth place at The CJ Cup Byron Nelson on Friday while Japan's Taiga Semikawa also stayed within striking reach of 36-hole leader Jake Knapp. Kim delivered a bogey-free 7-under 64 at TPC Craig Ranch to lie four strokes off the pace on 10-under, which was matched by Semikawa, who returned a 68 in the 9.5 USD million PGA Tour showpiece. *—ANI*